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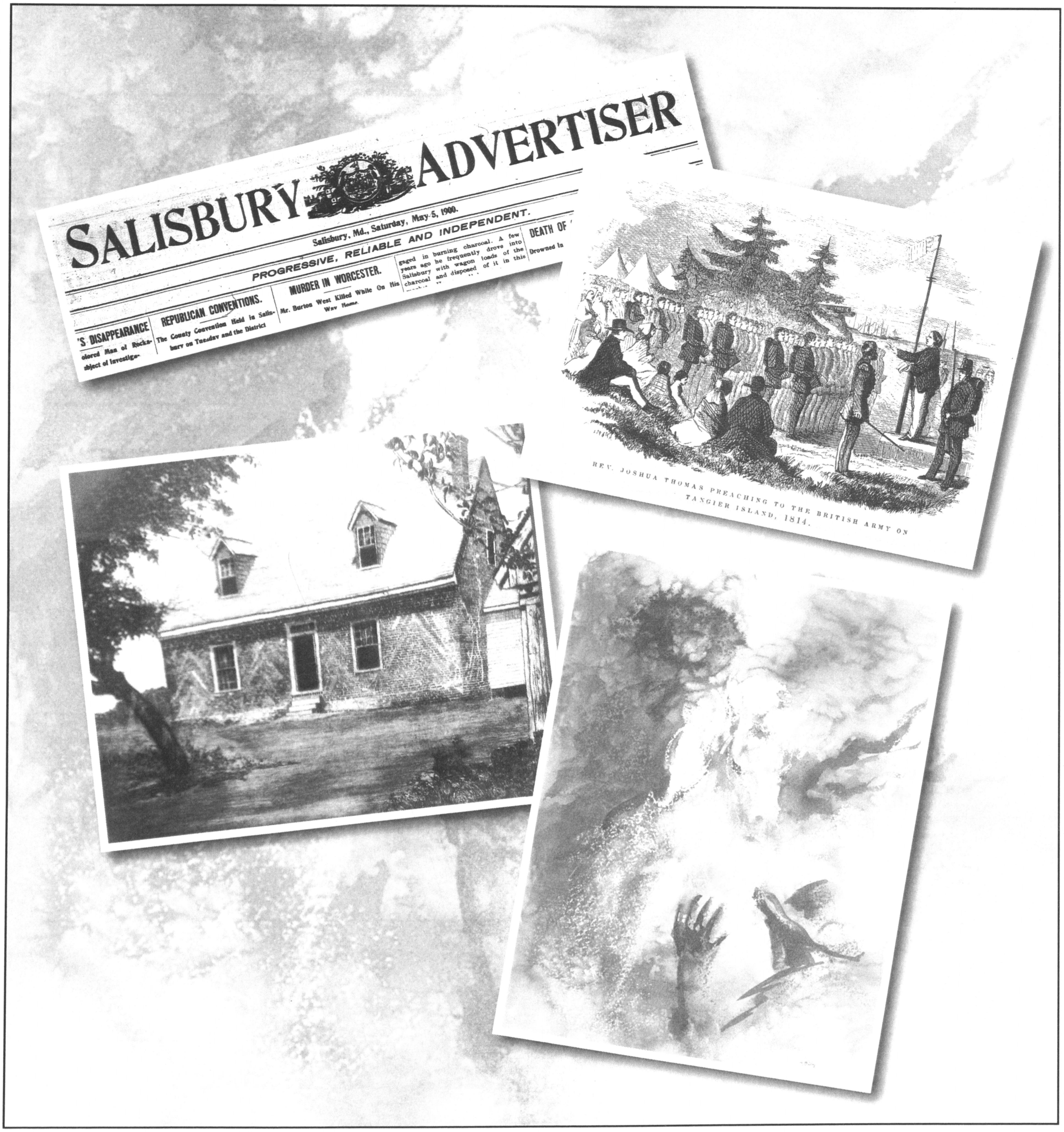
Shoreline

Vol. 19 • July 2012

For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University



SALISBURY ADVERTISER

Salisbury, Md., Saturday, May 5, 1900.

PROGRESSIVE, RELIABLE AND INDEPENDENT.

'S DISAPPEARANCE

olored Man of Rocka-
ubject of Investiga-

REPUBLICAN CONVENTIONS.

The County Convention Held in Salisbury on Tuesday and the District

MURDER IN WORCESTER.

Mr. Burton West Killed While On His Way Home.

gaged in burning charcoal. A few years ago he frequently drove into Salisbury with wagon loads of the charcoal and disposed of it in this

DEATH OF

Drowned In

REV. JOSHUA THOMAS PREACHING TO THE BRITISH ARMY ON TANGIER ISLAND, 1814.

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

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Salisbury, MD

In a Word

By Dr. G. Ray Thompson

We've had a whirlwind spring semester here at Nabb – celebrating our 30th year of bringing records and services both to students and to our patrons throughout Delmarva and across the United States. April 20, the date of our anniversary celebration, was a great evening with lots of good food, great music and camaraderie. Photos record the wonderful time had by the attendees. Damika Baker, our outreach coordinator, masterminded a hugely successful 1980s-themed event, complete with glitter ball and band playing and singing songs from the decade of the founding of Nabb. Many of our guests came attired in their '80s togs and some even danced to the frenetic music of the time.

Just as important to us at Nabb is the on-campus programming and events we do. Our spring semester saw presenters speaking on a variety of African-American subjects and on the changing face of Delmarva. Online we presented the "Storm of '62," while in our gallery we saw the "Salisbury Fire of 1886," which segued into our second exhibit "Main Street Salisbury."

Our summer *Shoreline* issue is chock-a-block full of tantalizing articles on a variety of subjects from the War of 1812 to the grisly mid-18th century border controversy involving the Outten/Willey shoot-out and an unsolved murder of the "Wild West" family of Delmarva.

Articles on historic architecture of the Eastern Shore, 18th and 19th century medical practices, and memories and folklore of the Eastern Shore complete this issue of the *Shoreline*. We end on a whimsical note with a folk tale of the pirate Blackbeard and his stashing gold just a few hundred yards from where the Nabb Center now stands. Should we get out our metal detectors?

Enjoy the articles and stop by to see us at the Nabb Center this summer if you have the opportunity. We'll be here and would enjoy seeing each of you.

Submissions

The Nabb Research Center is always interested in articles on the history, culture or heritage of the Delmarva region. If you or anyone you know is interested in writing for *Shoreline*, please send material, proposals, suggestions or comments to the attention of the "Newsletter Editor" as follows:

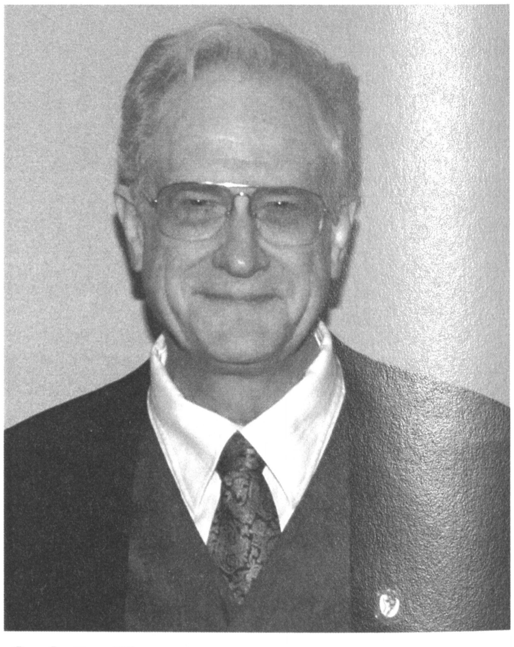
Nabb Research Center
Salisbury University
1101 Camden Ave.
Salisbury, MD 21801-6860

Or by e-mail to rcdhac@salisbury.edu. Please include the words "Newsletter Editor" in the subject line.

Hours & Closings

READING ROOM HOURS:
Monday: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

GALLERY HOURS:
Closed for the summer: Reopens August 27
Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 1-4 p.m.
or by appointment (please call 410-543-6312).



Dr. G. Ray Thompson

Shoreline

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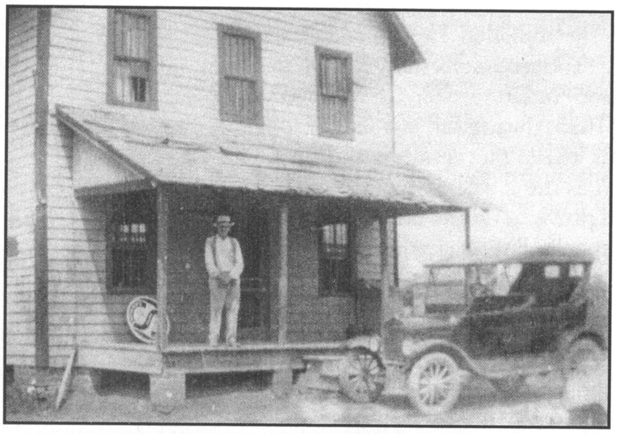

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Nabb Center Delebrates 30th Anniversary

Volume 19 • July 2012

Director and Founder, Dr. G. Ray Thompson. *Outreach Coordinator,* Damika Baker. *Archivist,* David Ranzan. *Research Assistant,* T. Aaron Horner. *Office Manager,* Donna T. Messick. *Receptionist,* Denise Horner & Pilar Burton. *Archival Assistant,* Julie Messick. *Graduate Assistant,* Charles Overholt & Nikole Delosier.

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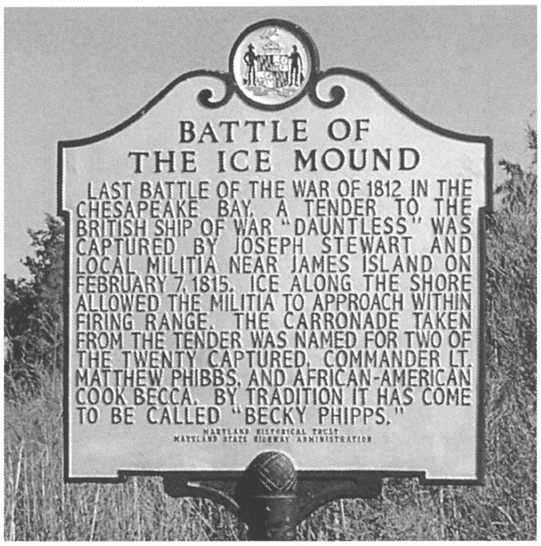
About the Front Cover:

The sketch in the upper right is of Joshua Thomas, Parson of the Islands; the banner of the *Salisbury Advertiser* for May 5, 1900, notes "Murder in Vorcester"; lower left picture is the Colonial brick Fassett house, fired on by British cannon during the War of 1812. The color background image of "Blackbeard and the Treasure" is by Eastern Shore painter Jim Stirby.

The Battle of Ice Mound

By Linda Duyer

The British warship *Dauntless* approached Taylors Island and Tobacco Stick (now known as Madison) in Dorchester County, MD, in early 1815, during the last year of the War of 1812. The resulting skirmish, known as the Battle of Ice Mound, would prove to be the last battle in the Chesapeake Bay, occurring only a few months before the end of the war.


BATTLE OF
THE ICE MOUND
LAST BATTLE OF THE WAR OF 1812 IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY. A TENDER TO THE BRITISH SHIP OF WAR "DAUNTLESS" WAS CAPTURED BY JOSEPH STEWART AND LOCAL MILITIA NEAR JAMES ISLAND ON FEBRUARY 7, 1815. ICE ALONG THE SHORE ALLOWED THE MILITIA TO APPROACH WITHIN FIRING RANGE. THE CARRONADE TAKEN FROM THE TENDER WAS NAMED FOR TWO OF THE TWENTY CAPTURED, COMMANDER LT. MATTHEW PHIBBS, AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN COOK BECCA. BY TRADITION IT HAS COME TO BE CALLED "BECKY PHIPPS."
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

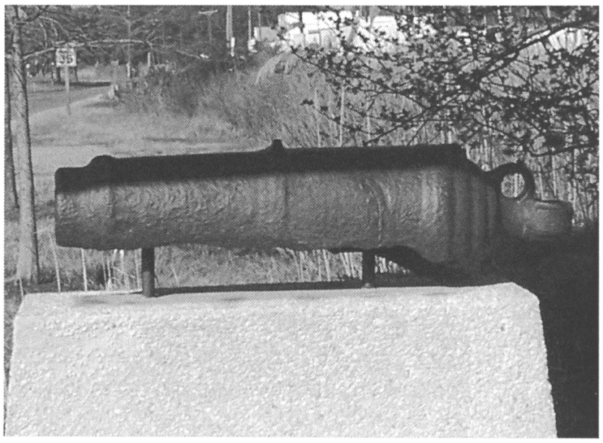
Battle of Ice Mound historical marker located on Taylors Island Road in Dorchester County.

The *H.M.S. Dauntless*, launched in 1808, was the last of the Cormorant class sloops built for the British Royal Navy. It was a formidable vessel, with 16 32-pound carronades, eight 18-pound carronades and two 6-pound long guns. It resembled its sister ship, *Blossom*, launched two years earlier.

The *Dauntless* had a tender, a smaller boat providing ship-to-shore service for the warship. The tender was equipped with small arms and a 12-pound carronade, a short cast iron cannon developed for the Royal Navy and used on ships from the 1770s to the 1850s as a short-range weapon.

The Chesapeake Bay region had been beset by the British raiding locals along the bay's shores, by stealing livestock and provisions, burning buildings and boats, and kidnapping.

The crew of the *Dauntless'* tender had the misfortune of conducting raids in the Dorchester County area that winter; the timeline of events is not entirely clear. The February 25, 1815, *National Intelligencer* states that "On Sunday evening, the 5th day of February, 1815, a British schooner (as it afterward appeared, a tender to the *Dauntless*) came to near James Island, and in the night sent a barge ashore and took off from Moses Geohagan's farm seven sheep; and on their departure rigidified that they should come again the next day."



The 12-pound carronade from the H.M.S. Dauntless, *which was dismantled after the battle. The local community kept the cannon and named it the "Becky Phipps," after Lieutenant Matthew Phibbs and the black cook, Becca, who was captured with the crew.*

The ship tender was led by Lieutenant Matthew Phibbs, with one midshipman, 13 crewmen and three Royal Marines. According to one source on Monday, February 6, "they stole seven sheep from a farm, burned several vessels and captured a black man and a woman, a cook by the name of Becca" before beginning their return to the *Dauntless*.

It is unclear if the tender got stuck in the ice on its return to the *Dauntless* or if the tender took off from the *Dauntless* for another trip to the shore. One account says that ice "impeded them to the point where they had to stop for the night in the lee shore of James Island." The *National Intelligencer* stated that on "Monday morning the schooner returned to the ship, and in the evening came in again towards the Island" where it got stuck in the ice offshore.

But by morning the crew found the tender trapped in the ice close to the shore near James Island. Meanwhile, a local militia, anticipating the return of the tender, organized for action.

The National Intelligencer describes how "Notice was given to Colonel Jones of the militia, who ordered some men to meet at different places, to be in readiness to march for James Island; and in the meantime, directions were sent to Joseph Stewart to deliver out cartridges from a quantity which had been placed in his possession. Joseph Stewart set off for James Point, with the cartridges intended to be distributed; and on his arrival there he found a collection of twenty persons, consisting of men and boys, and a few black persons."

The local detachment of the 48th Maryland Militia had formed and found the tender stuck in the ice. The band of the militia led by Joseph Stewart traversed the ice to within 1,500 yards of the trapped tender. The band hid behind a large mound of ice protecting them from the tender's carronade and commenced firing on the British. After two hours, the crew of the tender surrendered.

One account indicates that the tender's crew were imprisoned in Easton. Another account says that "two of the British crew, including Lieutenant Phibbs, were taken to Easton and eventually Baltimore, while the rest were placed under guard by the American militia and confined in a local jail near Madison." Joseph Stewart petitioned Congress for prize money for capturing the British tender, and a year later, the awarded $1,800 was split among Stewart and his men.

The community of Taylors Island kept the tender's 12-pound carronade, which came to be named the "Becky Phipps," after Lieutenant Phipps and the cook Becca, or likely Rebecca. The remains of the carronade are on display on Taylors Island.

Linda Duyer is a local historian and Nabb Center volunteer.

Blackbeard and His Gold

by Ed Perdue

Back in the 1970s-1980s, I was doing research on the Perdue family. During this research a story surfaced that Blackbeard the pirate had buried gold near Salisbury, MD.

One day, I was talking to Milford Perdue about the story. He invited me to take a ride to an area near the back of his farm. We got in his farm truck and drove to a stand of trees near which he parked his truck. He indicated that this was the spot where the treasure was buried.

I asked him how he knew this. I questioned him on how the pirates would have chosen this spot, because the farm looked to be about 1,000 acres in extent. The comment he made was that someone had a map with an "X" on it, and he showed me where digging had taken place.

Apparently, Blackbeard had left his ship down in Virginia to clean barnacles off of the bottom. (You may remember that Blackbeard was a pirate from 1716 to 1718.) As the story goes, the British were after him, and he and his men headed north over land in the southern part of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Outside of Salisbury they dug a deep hole to bury the treasure. They killed a horse and put its remains over the treasure, figuring that anyone digging would run into this rotten meat and stop digging. No reference could be found in books or newspapers of the time about this story.

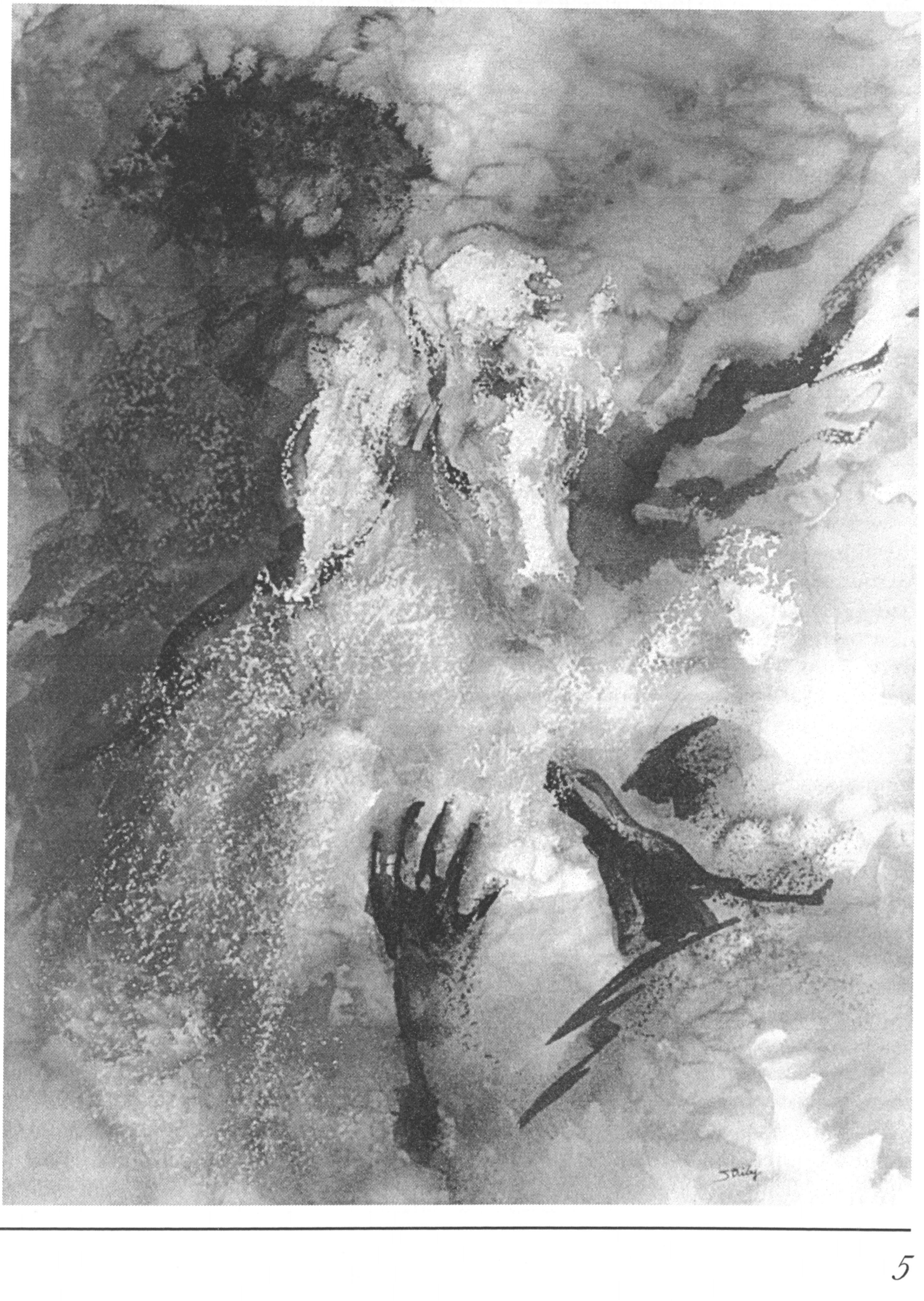
Milford added that one year his field workers and he were planting sweet potato plants in that general area of the supposed buried treasure. One worker would open the hole, the next would put the plant in the hole, and the third would add water and close the hole. Apparently, as the day progressed, the worker in the lead struck something metallic in the ground. Shortly afterward, the man felt a horse snort at his neck. The man knew about Blackbeard and the treasure and in fear he ran, and Milford commented, "I mean ran." Milford said he could not get the man back in the field to help with planting the sweet potatoes. Apparently, no one else saw the horse that day.

This was an interesting story. I took it to an artist who I knew in Berlin, Jim Stirby. When I first met him, he had completed 12 mythological paintings, one of them "Phoenix Bird Flying out of the Ashes." My question to him, "Would you paint this story?" We sat and talked for the longest time about Blackbeard. Then he accepted the commission. It took about six months, and then he called me in Boston, where I was working. I came down in October of that year to pick up the painting. It was also the time of the Perdue reunion.

I gave a talk at the Perdue reunion on the painting, "Blackbeard and the Treasure." When I finished, an aged lady of about 94 years stood up and I thought, "I am dead now!" But she commented that it was the best painting she had ever seen. She said that she understood it perfectly after my talk. I thought to myself, "Do not say another word."

I have included a copy of the painting with this story for your enjoyment. I only hope someday the students from the University dormitories, late at night, will explore the area to see if there is any truth to this story.

After having lived for years in New England, Edward Perdue has returned to his boyhood home on the Eastern Shore. A writer, Ed is best known for his detailed history of the Perdue family. His sense of humor and knowledge of the past has led to his current submission.



"Blackbeard and the Treasure" by Jim Stirby

The War of 1812 on the Eastern Shore: Battle Of Caulk's Field

by Dr. William H. Wroten Jr.

In the summer of 1814, when the War of 1812 was drawing to a close, the British undertook what might be considered a major campaign in the Chesapeake Bay region. When the main units of the British force moved up the Patuxent River for an attack on Washington, the frigate *Menelaus* with several smaller vessels, under the command of Sir Peter Parker, was sent to the northern area of the Bay. This was done primarily to draw the attention of the people of that region from the principal objective.

Sir Peter Parker, on August 20, approached Rock Hill, where he sent ashore several marauding parties. After that they sailed up to Worton Point which was shelled, and a detachment landed to burn some more buildings. On August 30, a landing was made at Fairlee, where more buildings were destroyed and a few slaves seized.

Just after midnight on August 31, another landing was made with 260 men under the command of Sir Peter Parker, assisted by Captain Henry Crease and a Lieutenant Pearce. Led by one of the captured slaves, they planned to attack Colonel Phillip Reed's 21st Regiment of 175 men, which was encamped about a mile from the shore and 9 miles from Chestertown.

The details of the engagement are somewhat confused, because naturally there were two "official" reports of what transpired – the American report and the British report. There is a wide difference in these reports, especially as to the relative strength of the opposing forces. Without becoming lost in the two arguments, the following narrative is generally accepted as to what happened on that day in August, 1814.

After a night of dancing and drinking, the British made their move to attack, taking a circuitous route with the hope of preventing any retreat or escape of American soldiers. But in the meantime, Reed, a man of considerable military experience, learned of the advancing enemy and their plans. First, Reed had his supplies and baggage moved to the rear, then he formed his troops for defense on a piece of rising ground about a mile from camp. Thus British forces were not favored with the element of surprise.

What follows is part of the report that Colonel Reed sent to Brigadier General Benjamin Chambers at the close of the engagement:

About half past eleven o' clock on the night of the 30th ult., I received information that the barges of the enemy, then lying off Waltham's farm, were moving into shore. I concluded their main object was to land and burn houses, etc., at Waltham's and made the necessary arrangement to prevent them and to be prepared for an opportunity which I had sought for several days to strike the enemy. During our advance to the point threatened, it was discovered that that blow was aimed at our camp. Orders were immediately given to the quartermaster to remove the camp and baggage, and to the troop to countermarch, pass the road by the right of our camp, and form on the rising ground about 300 paces in the rear and left. I directed Capt. Wickes and his second lieutenant Beck, with a part of the rifle company to be formed, so as to cover the road by which the enemy marched, and with this section I determined to post myself, leaving the line to be formed under the direction of Major Wickes and Captain Chambers.

The head of the enemy's column soon presented itself and received the first of our advance party, at 70 paces distance, and, being pressed by numbers vastly superior, I repaired to my post in the line, having ordered riflemen to return and form on the right of the line. The fire now became general along the whole line, and was sustained by our troops with the most determined valor. The enemy pressed our front; foiled in this he threw himself on our left flank, which was occupied by Captain Chambers' company. Here, too, his efforts were equally unavailing. His fire had nearly ceased, when I was informed that in some parts of our line the cartridges were entirely expended, nor did any of the boxes contain more than a very few rounds, although each man brought 20 into the field.

The artillery cartridges were entirely expended. Under these circumstances I ordered the line to fall back to the conventional spot where part of the line was fortified, when the few remaining cartridges were distributed amongst a part of the line, which was again brought into the field, where it remained for a considerable amount of time, the night preventing a pursuit.

The artillery and infantry for whom there were no cartridges were ordered to this place. The enemy having made every effort in his power, although apprized of our having fallen back, manifested no disposition to follow us up, but retreated about the time our ammunition was exhausted.

When it is recollected that very few of our officers or men had ever heard the whistling of a ball; that the force of the enemy, as the most accurate information enables us to estimate, was double ours; that it was commanded by Sir Peter Parker of the *Menelaus*, one of the most distinguished officers in the British navy, and composed (as their officers admitted in a subsequent conversation) of as fine men as could be selected from the British service, I feel fully justified in the assertion that the gallantry of the officers and men engaged on this occasion, could not be excelled by any troops. The officers and men preformed their duty. It is, however, but an act of justice to notice those officers who seemed to display more than a common degree of gallantry. Major Wickes and his Lieutenant Beck of the rifle corps, Lieutenant Ennick and Ensign Shriven of Captain Chambers' company exerted themselves, as did Captain Hyson and his Lieutenant Grant, Captain Usselton of the brigade artillery and his Lieutenants Reed and Brown. Lieutenant Tilghman, who commanded the guns of the volunteer artillery, in the absence of Captain Hands who is in ill health and from home, was conspicuous for his gallantry, his much firmness.

I am indebted to Captain Wilson of the cavalry, who was with me, for his exertions, and also to Adjutant Hyson, who displayed much zeal and firmness throughout. To Dr. Blake, Dr. Gordon and to Isaac Spencer, Esq., who were accidentally in camp. I am indebted for their assistance in reconnoitering the enemy on his advance.

You will be surprised, sir, when I inform you that an engagement of so long continuance in an open field, when the moon shone brilliantly on the rising ground occupied by our troops, while the shade of the neighboring woods, under the protection of which the enemy fought, gave us but an indistinct view of anything but the flash of guns; that under the disparity of numbers against us and the advantage of regular discipline on the side of our enemy, we had not one man killed, and only one private wounded, and those slightly. The enemy left one midshipman and eight men dead on the field, and nine wounded; six of whom died in the course of a few hours. Sir Peter Parker was amongst the slain – he was mortally wounded with a buck shot and died before he reached the barges, to which he was conveyed by his men.

The enemy's force, consisting of marines and musketeers, was in part armed with boarding pikes, swords and pistols, no doubt intended for our tents, as orders had been given by Sir Peter not to fire. Many of these arms, with rockets, muskets, etc. have fallen into our hands, found by the picket guard under Ens. Shriven, which was posted on the battle ground for the remainder of the night. Nothing but want of the ammunition saved the enemy from destruction. ...

The battle, which had lasted for about an hour, ended when the British sounded the bugle for a retreat. The enemy losses have been recorded, by their own reports, as 14 killed and 27 wounded. Of course, the greatest loss to the British was that of Sir Peter Parker, who while displaying heroic courage was shot in the thigh. Not considering the wound serious, Sir Peter continued to lead the attack until the loss of blood caused him to drop. Thus before proper medical aid could be applied he bled to death.

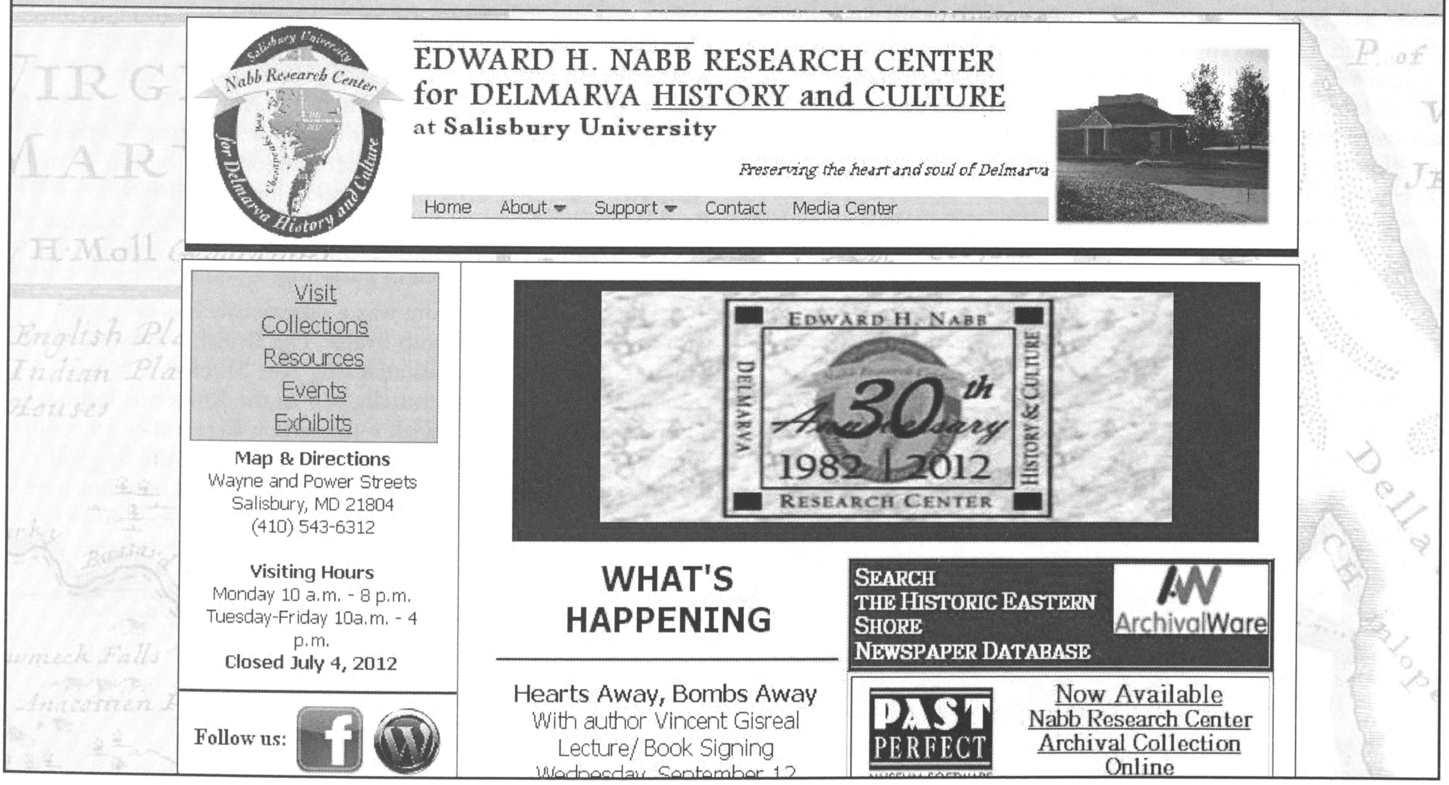
The news of this victory in Kent County was cheerfully received by the troops who had been gathering in the meantime for the defense of Baltimore. The courage of the Shoremen strengthened the hearts of the other soldiers, and at the same time was taken as a good omen. And in a way the Battle of Caulk's Field aided in the more famous defeat of the British at Baltimore and Fort McHenry.

On October 18, 1902, ceremonies were held in Kent County to honor Philip Reed and his brave men. And at the occasion, there was the unveiling of a stone to mark the Caulk's Field Battle Ground.

Notes: The text above was originally printed as part of the "Delmarva Heritage Series" in the *Salisbury Times*, November 14, 1962.

The late Dr. William H. Wroten, a Cambridge, MD, native and author of *Assateague*, was the former chair of the History Department at Salisbury University until his retirement in 1980.

Find information and listings of upcoming events and our constantly-growing collections and resources by visiting our Web site at: **http://nabbhistory.salisbury.edu**



EDWARD H. NABB RESEARCH CENTER
for DELMARVA HISTORY and CULTURE
at Salisbury University

Preserving the heart and soul of Delmarva

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Hearts Away, Bombs Away
With author Vincent Gisreal
Lecture/ Book Signing
Wednesday, September 12

SEARCH THE HISTORIC EASTERN SHORE NEWSPAPER DATABASE

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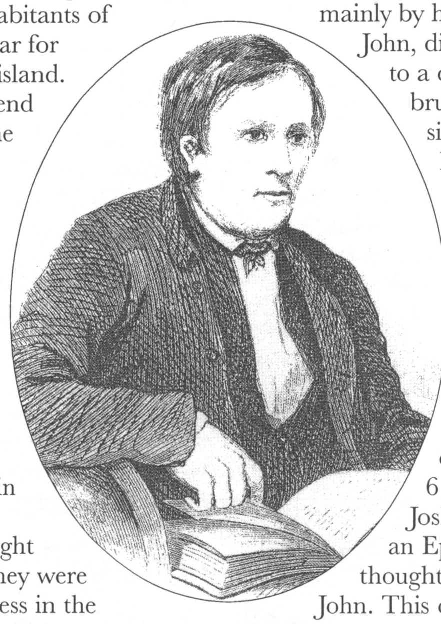
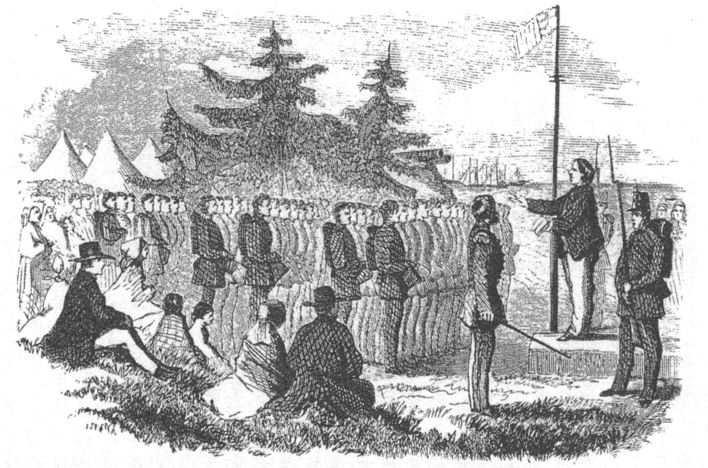
Reverend Joshua Thomas and His Sermon to the British Troops

By Kelly Jenney



In the War of 1812, Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay was taken over by British troops. The inhabitants of the island were considered prisoners of war for the duration of the time the British used the island. One of these men happened to be the Reverend Joshua Thomas, "Parson of the Islands," as he would later be known. At the end of the summer of 1814 the British troops, who had had the upper hand in nearly all of their battles thus far, were preparing to take Baltimore. An admiral of the troops enlisted the aid of Rev. Joshua Thomas, as he had a standing reputation for being a favored minister among the people. It was just before the British left for the Battle of Baltimore that Reverend Thomas gave his famous sermon to the British troops. He told them many things, but mainly that they would fail in their quest to conquer the port city and that many of them would die if they went on to fight this battle. This created a stir in the men as they were very confident due to their already great success in the taking of the Chesapeake. Thomas told the British troops that he had prayed over it and that God would not help them win this battle. He talked on the "wickedness of war" and that the sins that they were to commit were inexcusable. He famously stated one of the Ten Commandments in his speech, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," which is what some people refer to now as the name of the speech. He told the men about sin, about Jesus who saved them from sin, and about how even he, a minister, was guilty of sin. Some of the enemy troops approached him afterward thanking him for his sincere words and "faithful warnings." And yet, this speech did not deter the troops and they continued on their way to battle.

Joshua Thomas was born August 30, 1776, in Fairmount, then known as Potato Neck, in Somerset County. He was raised mainly by his mother Martha Hall Thomas, as his father, John, died when he was young. His mother remarried to a drunkard by the name of George Pruitt Sr., a brutal man who beat Joshua, his mother and his siblings. Joshua learned the evils of alcohol from his stepfather's influence and avoided the substance completely. George Pruitt drowned when Joshua was still a young man. It was around this age that Joshua developed his love for the Lord as well as his skill as a waterman. From there he went on to work for a waterman named David Tyler on Smith Island. His waterman craft would later aid him in ways yet unimaginable to him.



REV. JOSHUA THOMAS PREACHING TO THE BRITISH ARMY ON TANGIER ISLAND, 1814.

Joshua Thomas married Rachel Evans on September 10, 1797, and together they had 6 children before she died at the age of 27. Joshua, who had occasionally attended worship at an Episcopalian Church, began giving serious thought to his beliefs after baptizing his first born son, John. This church was located in Annemessex (now Crisfield), so they had to take boats to get there. Thomas was saddled with the duty of transporting the Reverend of his church, Rev. Joshua Reese, to and from the islands when he needed to preach there by way of Thomas' canoe, *The Methodist*. This is when he began to attend Sabbath religiously. By chance, Joshua one day found himself in St. Peter's Methodist Church after failing to locate Rev. Reese. Although he was initially reluctant with his first visit, he later picked up an interest in Methodism at a camp meeting where Lorenzo Dow preached. A year later at another camp meeting, Joshua Thomas officially converted to Methodism. From there he took on the role of an "exhorter" on the nearby islands. Soon after the British arrived, Brother Thomas, as he was also known among locals, became a leader on Tangier Island and an important figure in the history of the War of 1812.

The Battle of Baltimore was a notoriously bloody battle with massive injuries on both fronts. The British warships, of which there were 19, began attacking Fort McHenry. Many casualties occured and eventually, just as the Reverend Joshua Thomas predicted, the British retreated on September 14, 1814. This was the very day that Francis Scott Key saw the flag still flying above Baltimore. Reverend Joshua Thomas may not have been able to stop the Battle of Baltimore, but his sermon to the enemy troops is a speech that lives on in the history of the Eastern Shore.

Kelly Jenney is an English major and was an intern at the Nabb Center during the Spring 2012 semester.

Kitty Knight, Sho' Heroine in the War of 1812

By Dr. William H. Wroten Jr.

On the banks of the Eastern Shore's Sassafras River lie the twin villages of Fredericktown and Georgetown – the former on the north bank in Cecil County and the latter on the south bank in Kent County. The tranquility of these charming villages was upset by fire and when British forces made one of their invasions of the Eastern Shore during the War of 1812.

During crucial periods such as war, individuals of great courage and leadership often come forth. Such a person during the War of 1812 was the heroine Catherine Knight. Better known as Kitty Knight, this brave woman was to become well-known all over the Eastern Shore for her display of courage in the face of the British army.

Kitty Knight was the daughter of John Leach Knight and Catherine Matthews Knight, who lived for some time at Knight's Island before moving to Georgetown in Kent County. The father was a prominent and active citizen of the area, and her mother's twin brother Dr. William Matthews had served in the General Assembly of Maryland and was also a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1797 to 1799. Miss Knight, who became a celebrity in her own right, was born about 1775.

When the approach of British forces was rumored (Miss Knight was then about 38 years old) in the Sassafras River area, and for that matter all over the Eastern Shore, worry and excitement prodded men into collecting guns and arms in hopes of repelling an invasion. The old men, women and children remained at home to guard personal items, but with the arrival of troops, many of these inhabitants fled to the interior seeking safety for themselves and hiding places for their valuables.

After the British forces landed, they proceeded to burn Fredericktown and the lower part of Georgetown, coming finally to two brick houses atop a hill overlooking the river. In one of these lived an old woman, destitute and ill to the extent that she was unable to flee. The torch had already been applied to her home, when Kitty Knight arrived at the scene to plead with Admiral Cockburn to put out the flames to avoid burning the old woman alive. Although he complied with her wishes, the soldiers then fired the neighboring house, which was only a few feet away. Miss Kitty again pleaded with them not to burn the house, as it would surely ignite the old woman's home.

According to one version, she twice stamped out the flames, and the young officer in charge finally gave the command to leave the house standing. But as the soldiers trooped out of the house, one struck his axe through a panel of the front door, leaving a mark that was pointed out to visitors for years to come. Kitty Knight later purchased this house, which probably accounts for the story that one of the houses she saved was her own.

Frederick G. Usilton, in his *History of Kent County*, wrote that 25 years after this event, a gentleman from Kent County was touring in England when he met Admiral Cockburn's aide. Learning that Miss Knight was still living, the aide requested that his "sincere compliments" be sent to her.

In the twin towns, the sum total of property destroyed has been recorded as $35,625.88¼. About the only buildings in Georgetown that were not totally or partially destroyed by this invasion were the two brick houses on the hill and the church. A local newspaper of November 22, 1855, in an article referring to Miss Knight's recent death, printed that "by her heroism at the burning of Georgetown ... she saved several families from being made homeless and friendless by the fire and sword ... her appeal so moved the commodore that he ordered the troops to their barges and left unburned a church and several houses now standing there as monuments to her memory for this noble and hazardous act. ..."

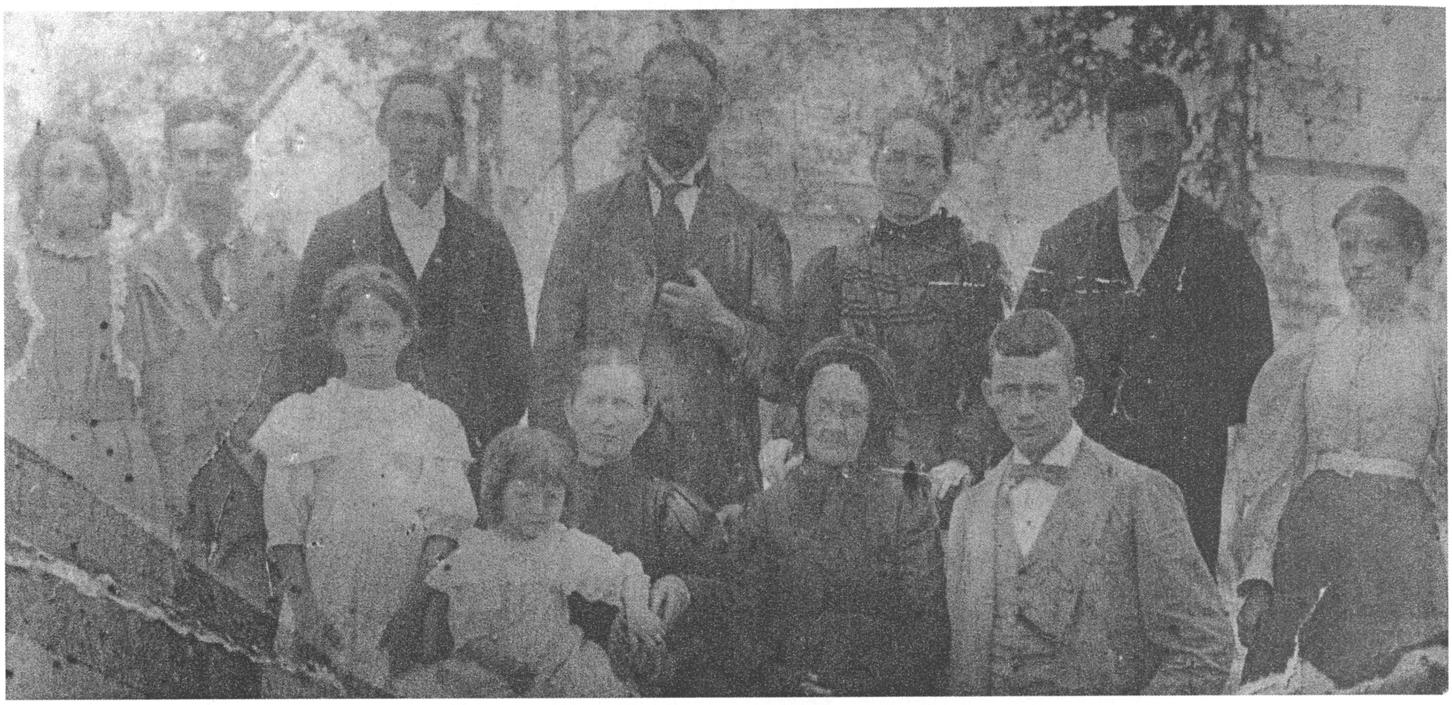
In 1899, a steamboat that for many years operated upon the Sassafras River and in the Chesapeake Bay was rebuilt and named the Kitty Knight, the owners doing so to honor her role in the defense of Georgetown.

Kitty Knight, the Eastern Shore's own heroine of the War of 1812, died in 1855. She is buried in the Knight's family plot in the graveyard of St. Francis Xavier Church, Warwick, Cecil County.

Notes: The text above was originally printed as part of the "Delmarva Heritage Series" in the *Salisbury Times*, December 1, 1958.

The Wild Wests: An Eastern Shore Saga

By Eleanor Mulligan



A rare family portrait: (top from left) Bessie, Cyrus, John William, Painter Dallas, Alice, visiting Preacher Gibbons, and Della; (bottom from left) Mamie, Viola, Nancy (holding Viola), Betsey Dickerson West and Durant.

It was like a TV western – fast track action, intrigue, mystery. The May 5, 1900, issue of *The Salisbury Advertiser* reports the story of an unsolved murder in Worcester County.

Mr. Burton West Killed While on His Way Home.

Snow Hill, Md., April 29. Burton West, a prosperous farmer whose house is about seven miles from Snow Hill, was killed on the county road about one and a half miles from Snow Hill some time last night.

His body was found early this morning by a farm hand employed by Charles McKee. It was lying stretched out in a fence corner with the face turned up. From the impressions in the road the body had evidently been dragged about 18 feet to the point where it was found. By tracing that way a large pool of blood was discovered, but it had been covered with sand scraped up by some one's foot. There were tracks about, but not sufficient to lead any considerable distance.

This article came to light as my cousins, Jerry and Gloria Ragains, were searching all over the Eastern Shore for the gravesites of Minus and Betsey Dickerson West, the parents of Burton, the murdered farmer. The Wests, one of the most noteworthy families of Maryland's Eastern Shore, are Jerry's ancestors and their gravesites remain elusive. Gloria, with a practiced detective's eye, has ferreted out much of the information in this article. She must have wondered some time ago if she had walked onto a set of *Law and Order*.

Mr. West was in Snow Hill Saturday. He was drinking during the night and when he started for home was under the influence of liquor. Some friends hired two colored boys named Sanders Townsend and Arnold Martin, who live in his direction, to go home with Mr. West to see that nothing happened to him.

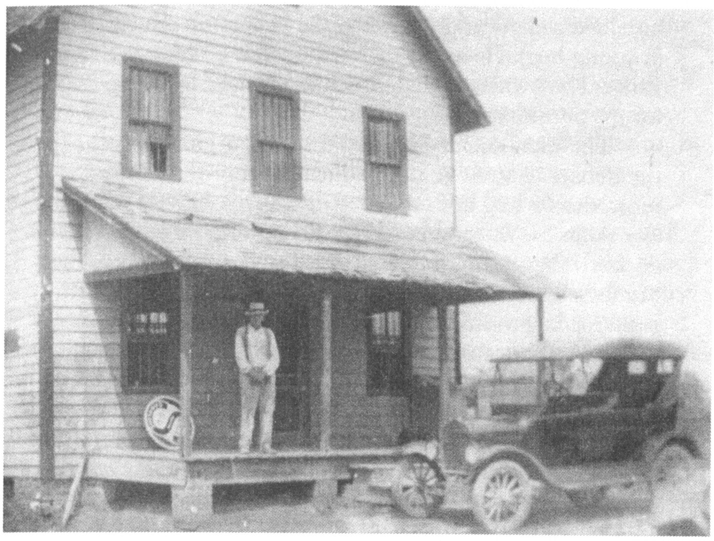
According to the story told by the boys they started at about 10:30 (p.m.), driving a pair of mules and one horse with a wagon load of shingles. When they got to what is known as the 'Mile Post' at the forks of the road, about a quarter of a mile from where the body was found, the boys claim that they told Mr. West they would cut across the fields and join him at another turn of the road, but instead of doing so they went directly to the home of Henry Townsend, brother-in-law of Sanders, who lives in the opposite direction, and stayed all night. They say they neither knew nor saw anything more of him until they were told of his death by Mr. Elijah Carmean this morning.

When the officer went after them to appear before the Coroner's jury this morning the boys were on their way home, but the direction they were going would have made their walk longer by at least half a mile and did not lead by the scene of the tragedy. They were searched, but no money or property of Mr. West was found on them.

The team with the load of shingles was found at Mr. West's gate about 4 o'clock this morning by some member of the family. It is not known how long it had been there.

Dr. Paul Jones, who examined the wounds, says there was a fracture of the skull above the right ear, a large contused wound on the right side of the head and a scalp wound. There was also a ragged cut on the right shoulder and the collar bone was broken. It is possible, he thinks, that the wounds might have been inflicted by his having been thrown from the wagon, but highly improbable. The covering of the blood and the dragging of the body by some person or persons yet unknown and the fact that Mr. West was accustomed to carry considerable sums of money with him and the fact that the watch he wore was missing all point to the theory of murder.

Another suspicious circumstance is that very early this morning two colored men, who have not been identified, stopped at the house of a colored



P.D. West standing outside of his general store.

woman about three miles distance and told her to notify Mr. Cranfield, who lives nearby, that Mr. West had been killed. No definite clue to the identity of these parties have been found, but from the location of the two boys, Townsend and Martin, when found by Deputy Sheriff Hearthway, it is possible they are the ones.

An inquest was held on the spot by Charles Parker, Justice of the Peace, and was conducted by State's Attorney Jones. Townsend and Martin were jailed. Late this afternoon the jury, Dr. J.B. Aydelotte, foreman, rendered a verdict that the deceased had come to his death at the hands of persons unknown. The two boys are at present held as witnesses.

Snow Hill, Md., May 3—Frank Williams, colored, was placed in Snow Hill jail this afternoon under suspicion of being connected with the killing of Burton West.

Mr. West was about 60 years old and leaves a large family. He was a hard toiler. He owned the farm on which he lived in Coulbourn's district in Worcester County, and besides farming he was engaged in burning charcoal. He frequently drove into Salisbury with wagon loads of the charcoal and disposed of it in this market. He was well known to many of the people of Salisbury.

No further newspaper accounts relate additional information about the murder. Even after the most assiduous investigation that could be done at that time, Burton West's assassin was not brought to justice.

Just as intriguing, though, is the ongoing sleuthing to find the gravesites of Burton's parents. As the Ragains searched through local and periodical records, the story of the singular West family unfolded.

In the early 1600s, ancestor Thomas West and his wife landed in Revel's Neck on the Manokin River. They were part of the mass influx of immigrants coming up from Virginia, those who had left the Old Country for religious freedom. Eventually, Thomas and his family made it northward to lower Sussex County, Delaware.

One of Thomas West's sons, Stockley, was Minus' father. Minus married Betsey Dickerson and they eventually left Delaware and migrated to Millville, MD, in the 1840s (about seven miles on Route 12 from Snow Hill). As an expert charcoal burner, or collier, Minus contracted to the old Iron Furnace. Charcoal was an important specialty at that time. Charcoal pits were visible in scores of places then. Furnaces, blacksmith shops and some homes burned charcoal. Even the railroads burned wood to generate steam for locomotives.

Colliers worked by carefully stacking wood in a pile, covering the pile with dirt, and then applying a low, steady heat using as little air as possible. This became quite intricate and the timing was crucial. If the smoldering wood was exposed to too much air, it would burn with a bright flame and become ashes, not charcoal. An important part of the collier's job was to make sure the pile did not burst into flames.

In 1850 the company operating the furnace went bankrupt. Most likely steel costs prompted this. Early European smelters could only reach 700 degrees. The furnace was producing product in temperatures in the 2000s. After updating with air tubes they got up to 3,000 degrees.

But the big companies to the north were doing things in a better – and hotter – way. And so the company operating the furnace folded.

One of the articles listed in the liquidation sale was 21,000 baskets of charcoal!

Most of Minus and Betsy's children were born at Mill's Mill in Worcester County. A man named Mill owned a mill, and, as names unfolded over the years, we feel certain that is how the town became known as Millville. In this community there was no church.

One of Minus West's sons was Painter Dallas (1845-1937). He and his wife Nancy, whose maiden name was also West, left Millville for the more fertile soil of East Somerset County. It was said that the sandy soil of Millville was better suited to grow briars than corn!

Land around Perryhawkin is still tilled each year by Wests. Long ago, before settling in Perryhawkin, P.D. West had a general store and ran the post office in an area known as Bounds Fork, where two roads met at a fork and became one road. Soon everyone called the place West Post Office. It was about eight miles from Perryhawkin.

One of Painter Dallas' sons, William, wrote of the events leading to Painter Dallas' subsequent preaching career:

> A majority of citizens were non-church. Profanity and drinking intoxicating liquors were common. The Old School Baptist Church members majored in teaching predestination. Most of their preachers were partakers of liquors and several became intoxicated. Dances were held in rural homes and frequently men left the dance to drink, and return to dance. A fiddler supplied the music.

William's memoir continues:

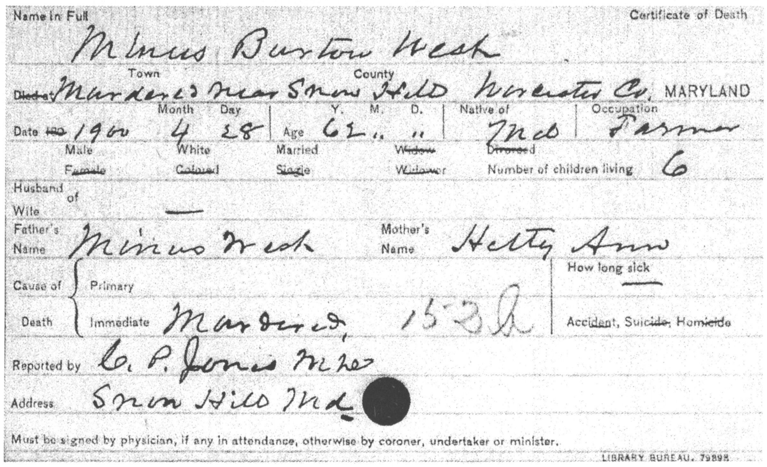
> When I was about seven years old, our first public school house of one room was built. Our teacher endeavored to teach us to commit to memory the Lord's Prayer. He suggested that we repeat this prayer before we went to bed. It is doubtful that any other pupil followed his advice, for my cousins were of Old School Baptist families or from non-church member homes.
>
> I decided to say my prayers that night on the day he suggested. After a study of my primer, I sat hesitating to do so, for my parents were nonreligious. The delay resulted in my mother's telling me to go to bed. Children usually obeyed their parents then. The next day I decided I would

repeat the prayer that night. After study, I again hesitated and was told to go to bed. The third night the delay after study occurred. My mother had witnessed a change in my attitude, and said, "I want to know why you are staying up so late and what are you thinking about?"

The reply was, "Mother, I want to say my prayers." Kneeling at once, I repeated the Lord's Prayer from memory. When I was seated, I was embarrassed and was afraid of being rebuked. Soon my mother was shedding tears and said to father, "When a child takes the lead, I think it is time we are doing better."

After breakfast the next Sunday morning, she (my mother) said to father, "I am going to church this morning and I am going to join the church." Father, much agitated, went out and walked to and fro across the yard many times in a mental struggle. He won the victory and entered the house and told my mother he would go with her and join the church also.

My sister Alice and I were given permission to go to the mill and see them baptized that afternoon. As a poor barefooted boy, in company with my sister, we went to the mill, where a saw and grist mill were operated. The preacher, wearing a black robe, walked ahead of my parents. A few disciples marched behind them singing "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand." It was a beautiful day in April. I saw my parents immersed in Christian baptism which symbolized and dramatized the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord.


Name in Full
Certificate of Death
Minus Burton West
Town County
~~Died at~~ Murdered near Snow Hill Worcester Co. MARYLAND
Date ~~190~~ 1900 Month 4 Day 28 Age Y. 62 M. " D. " Native of Md Occupation Farmer
Male White Married ~~Widow~~ ~~Divorced~~
~~Female~~ ~~Colored~~ ~~Single~~ ~~Widower~~ Number of children living 6
Husband of Wife —
Father's Name Minus West Mother's Name Hetty Ann
Cause of Death Primary How long sick —
Immediate Murdered, 153h
Accident, ~~Suicide~~, ~~Homicide~~
Reported by C. P. Jones MD
Address Snow Hill Md.
Must be signed by physician, if any in attendance, otherwise by coroner, undertaker or minister.
LIBRARY BUREAU. 79898

Certificate of death for Burton West.

Elder David Fowler was the preacher. He had migrated to Salisbury as a clock cleaner and repairman. He had a regular appointment in an old storehouse owned by a Mr. Smullen. His disciples were called "Newlight Baptists." After making about twenty disciples, he went off after strange doctrines. Father protested. The little flock scattered. Only my parents and two or three others met for worship and the communion.

Great Grandfather West began to preach in homes and in brush arbors in the summertime. He had to learn to read after his baptism, for the Civil War caused the subscription school to be closed and in these schools the New Testament was the textbook for teaching the alphabet and reading.

Painter Dallas West founded Christian churches first at Mt. Olivet, then at Perryhawkin, Fruitland, Snow Hill and Salisbury.

Another portion of William's memoir is stunning:

When Virginians began to favor establishing public schools, a man favoring educating girls met a man who opposed it in a debate. The speaker who favored female education had attended a show and witnessed the acts of an educated shoat (a young hog). He asked the owner what he regarded as its value. The owner replied, 'I would not take less than $500.00 for my pet shoat.'

The man decided he had a strong argument to use in the debate to show that an educated hog was worth far more than a hog not educated.

After the first man used a strong point, his fellow debater declared that he, himself, had won the debate. He cried out, "In the name of heaven, who could afford to pay $5.00 a point for hog meat?" Said he, "Our women cost us enough now. If we educate them, they will cost us so much we cannot afford it."

The Wests – like many others – were able farm folk. Minus West was known as an expert woodchopper. But a few of the Wests were prodigiously strong. Notes from that time make this clear:

A man made a bet of $50 that Minus could not cut a cord of pinewood in an hour. Grandfather had several sharp axes, and his strength was so tremendous he did not have to raise his axe but a short distance as he chopped away. The time keeper saw so much wood cut he measured a cord and a quarter, cut in 58 minutes. It is doubtful that this record was ever surpassed.

One of Painter Dallas' brothers, John, was a giant in strength. One day, some of the family were at Eden to ship produce and return with merchandise in a spring wagon. On the high platform was a barrel of granulated sugar weighing about 323 pounds. The head of the barrel had come off in parts and the agents were puzzled about how it might be removed to the lower platform and loaded without spilling the sugar that came to within about an inch of the top of the barrel. John arrived during this embarrassment, picked up the barrel of sugar, walked with it down to the lower platform, and placed it on our spring wagon and spilled none. It is doubtful that John L. Sullivan could have lasted more than two or three rounds with these strong Wests.

A few months ago, Jerry, Gloria and I were wandering on great-grandfather's property on Stagecoach Road near Millville Road and Route 50. We were picking up pieces of gorgeous granite that some trucker had dropped by the way. We could feel great-grandfather walking there – well he was probably on a horse – and again we wondered why in the world he would not have noted *where* in the world his parents were buried! And, our thoughts turned to the murder of his brother Burton.

It amazed us that the local newspaper published the graphic news immediately that morning of the murder … no bylines, the story got out as it was witnessed and somebody quickly went back to the office to offset and distribute it while it was hot, the way of newspaper publishing then.

By the mid-1800s, electrifying, hard-hitting news stories about the Civil War gave credence to newspaper writing. Now cheap, interesting reading material was a significant stimulus. By 1900, there was near universal literacy in the nation.

By the turn of the century, society and business were changing. Progress was in the air. On Maryland's largely rural Eastern Shore, the now huge West family represented the rough-and-tumble, intrepid America of farmers, blacksmiths, foundry workers, furnace men, miners, barge-haulers and ship captains. Plain people were keepers of their neighbors' safety. A farmer could be a lawman, a blacksmith might be mayor, and the bartender knew what everyone was doing and where he was doing it.

> *Salisbury Advertiser*, May 17, 1900. In the Orphans' Court letters of administration on the estate of Burton West, who was so mysteriously killed near Snow Hill a few days ago, were granted to his widow and State's Attorney Robley D. Jones. The personal estate is valued at $1,000. No further arrests have been made in connection with the killing of Mr. West, and if the officers have any further clues they have not made them public.

> *Salisbury Advertiser*, May 31, 1900. No indictments were found for the killing of Burton West near Snow Hill some weeks ago, but the Grand Jury recommended the detention of the parties now in jail pending the search for further evidence. However, additional information indicates that Martin was subsequently jailed on weapon concealment charges.

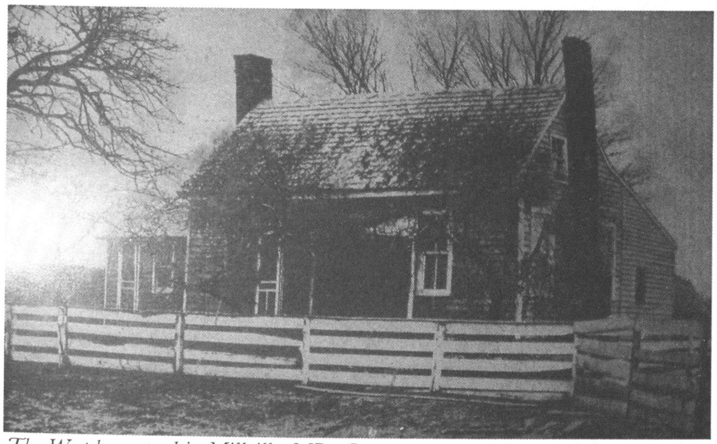
This reads like a script from *Gunsmoke*.

The West descendants have kept the population explosion going. Painter Dallas' eldest son John William became a preacher as did his sons.

Son Cyrus maintained the farm in Perryhawkin when the others had gone away, and prosperous, it still remains in his family.

Daughter Alice, an expert seamstress, went to Baltimore in the "Gay Nineties" to create gorgeous "leg of mutton" sleeves, the height of fashion at the time.

After working his father's timber mills and farming, Durant became a foreman of a power line clearing crew for Eastern Shore Public Service, which would become Delmarva Power. This company had begun as a WPA project in the Depression. His progeny became wholesale building suppliers, oil repair contractors and teachers.


The West homestead in Millville, MD. (Image courtesy of Jerry and Gloria Ragains.)

Tombstones of Burton West and his wife Hettie.

Daughter Bessie reared seven daughters, who married and worked together with their husbands in business or made homemaking their life interest. Brice Stump interviewed the youngest daughter Viola when she was 100 years old in The Daily Times of February 2, 1993, and wrote a great story about occupying soldiers and farmers during the Civil War. Several granddaughters became teachers in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

But a sense of incompleteness pervades this otherwise vivid history. Burton West's murder remains unsolved, and the whereabouts of Minus and Betsey's gravesites remains a lonely secret.

These questions needle us, and maybe they always will. How could the descendants of such a large, essential family as the Wests not have any idea where Minus and Betsey are buried? Why can no records of their burials be found?

Nowadays, many Wests have other names. With experienced, sophisticated tastes and adventurous dispositions, they are active as owners of large enterprises, gentlemen farmers, teachers, CPAs, members of numerous clubs and organizations, mega travelers – or they are happily retired. They are a part of the America of farmers, blacksmiths, preachers, colliers, men and women who grew from the land, each with deep religious conviction and an entrepreneurial spirit that bestowed strength, faith, and success on their descendants' endeavors. Who says this country is not exceptional! That exceptionalism is called the "American Dream."

Eleanor Mulligan, a member of the Nabb Research Center Board, is a frequent lecturer on historical topics and a lover of all things Eastern Shore, her ancestral home. Along with her cousins who researched the West family, Eleanor has put her journalistic skills to use in this article. Jerry and Gloria Ragains, the primary researchers for this article, live in Salisbury (jergloragains@gmail.com).

The Outten/Willey Affair

By R.J. Redden

A "Border War" between the Penn and Calvert families resulted, after a 100 years in court, in the establishment of the Mason Dixon Line. Incidentally, every one speaks of north or south when referring to the line. Delaware is east of it! The problem wasn't just a battle of words in an English court. There were raids, mostly by the Maryland people, that resulted in all sorts of mayhem.

In this account, we begin the story of one such raid by a Maryland sub-sheriff on a plantation in Delaware. Depositions about the resulting murder of Sub-Sheriff William Outten by John Willey on February 6, 1759, are recorded in *Archives of Maryland, 1761, Vol. XXXI* pp 326-351. The depositions contain much genealogical information, which is included herein.

Willey lived on a plantation in Delaware (as far as he was concerned) with his wife and children. The authorities of Worcester County, MD, claimed he was in Maryland. To muddy the waters more, Delaware was still governed by Pennsylvania, and the Delaware records are, for the most part, there.

On the fateful day, Outten recruited along with William Connoway, about 28 and of Worcester County, "sundry" other men to assist him in serving precepts (arrest warrants) for nonpayment of taxes on several people including William Mullinex and John Willey. The deputies split up, half going to each house. The men who went to the Mullinex house arrested Mullinex and then joined Outten at Willey's house.

According to Moses Timmons, a man over 30 years old, of Worcester County, upon his arrival at the Willey plantation, Outten sent Timmons and Gerald Hitchens to Willey's house to serve a writ. If they found Willey at home, one of them was to go outside and signal Outten. Outten stayed out of sight. Timmons and Hitchens found Willey at home with his wife, two unidentified young women and two small children. When Willey realized what was going on, he sent the women and children to inform his neighbors. (Why Outten didn't detain the women and children is not mentioned.) His wife was assigned to get word to Israel Coverdale and John Sharp.

Timmons gave the sheriff the signal, and Hutchens served the Writt (sic). When Willey saw the sheriff, he struggled with the deputies and forced them out of the house. He threatened to take Outten, dead or alive, to Lewes Town, and said if he had a gun he would shoot him off his horse. He then locked the door and went to his loft with a big stick. Outten and his men broke the door and went into the house. Outten couldn't talk Willey down, so he tried to go up after him. This resulted in Outten's being driven off by hard blows with the stick. A Col. Dennis, who was with the Outten party, realized that they weren't going to get Willey down and convinced all involved to amicably settle the matter and submit the dispute to the magistrates in Sussex and Worcester counties.

After a time, the Marylanders left the house and prepared to go home. Before they could get out of the yard, John Sharp, armed with a stick, and Pennington Welch, armed with an iron rod, arrived.

It should also be noted that references to what is now Delaware were to the Colony of Pennsylvania, since the split between the two had not yet taken place.

The bad blood between the border people and the Maryland authorities had been building for some time. Indictments for nonpayment of taxes were handed down by Worcester County's Grand Jury on November 7, 1758, against John Willey, Ezekiel Jones, Walter Kimmey, Edmond West, Dan Hopkins, Elijah Collins, John Lane, Thomas Passwaters, Barnett Kirk, William Lofley, James Ingram, John Sharpe, Even Morgan, Richard Cubberdel, Richard Cubberdel, Jun., John Cubberdel, Thomas Daughters, William Daughters and William Mullinux. Several raids had been conducted and the people were mad.

After a face-to-face confrontation in which Willey threatened to kill Outten, cooler heads prevailed and Outten was preparing to leave with his men. Unfortunately, before they could mount up and go, John Sharpe carrying a stick and Pennington Welch with an iron rod arrived. Sharpe was calling out, "Where is the damn'd Sheriff, I will Splitt (sic) to the earth." Outten was armed with a cutlass taken from Mullinux in the raid earlier that day. Sharpe and Welch exchanged blows with their weapons, and Welch hit Outten on the shoulder with such violence that he bent his iron bar. Outten wounded Sharpe in the left shoulder. The engagement ended when Welch and Sharpe ran away. Outten and his men went to their horses to leave, but "sundry persons" came up. Some had clubs, but two or three had guns. A little girl, believed to be John Willey's daughter, ran into the house and told Willey that there were guns in the crowd. Willey then left the house and called for a gun so he could shoot the "son of a bitch." John Sharp, who had returned when the crowd arrived, gave Willey a gun and bid him to shoot Outten. The crowd was all for it, but said to shoot him in the legs. Sharpe wanted him killed. Willey took Outten behind his house and shot him in the lower belly. Outten died in about six minutes. Several of Willey's friends stood around the body and "rejoiced much at the action." One of them, unnamed, said, "It was a Well Done Action of Willey in shooting the said Outten and that he had saved him the trouble of doing it himself." Shielded by the crowd, Willey and Sharpe escaped to a part of Sussex County that was not in contention. The Marylanders returned to Maryland with the body.

Others giving depositions about the facts of the incident were Worcester County residents "Benjamin Handy, Gent., High Sheriff, aged about 34, William Allegood, Gent., aged about 54, William Connaway, aged about 28, and John Dennis, Jun., Gent."

In addition to the depositions about the facts of the murder, the Worcester County authorities took testimony to try to prove that Willey was indeed a Maryland resident. The depositions didn't prove much. Most used the divide of the Nanticoke River as a reference. Some seemed to use it as the eastern border of Maryland, and some the northern. At any rate, what I take to be the divide is some 5 miles east and 10 miles north of the border. Worcester County residents giving the depositions about the location were: "Lanta Slavins, aged about 60, Abraham Ingram, aged about 38, John Pollock, aged about 50, Andrew Collins, aged about 47, William Gray, Planter, aged about 55, John Collins, Gent., aged about 34, John Shoot, Planter, aged 54, John Laws, aged 44, and John Spicer, Planter, aged 29. Thomas Hinders, of Sussex County upon the Delaware born at the Head of Dorchester County, Maryland, aged 35, was also deposed."

Willey and Sharpe were arrested by Sussex authorities. William Hayword of Somerset County, aged about 28, and Parker Selby of Worcester County, aged about 31, were present at the examination by Rives Holt of John Sharp taken at Lewes Town, Sussex County. Sharpe testified that the people who had been indicted by Worcester County had agreed among themselves to stand together to resist Outten.

After interrogating Willey and Sharpe, the Sussex County court allowed them their freedom. But in an unexplained twist, the Sussex County authorities somehow spirited Col. John Dennis, Gerrard Hickens, John Collins (son of Andrew), Moses Timmonds, John Kelly, William Winwright, Peter Dolby, William Connaway, Levin Disharoon, John Wooten and Elijah Long into Sussex County and detained them for inciting a riot!

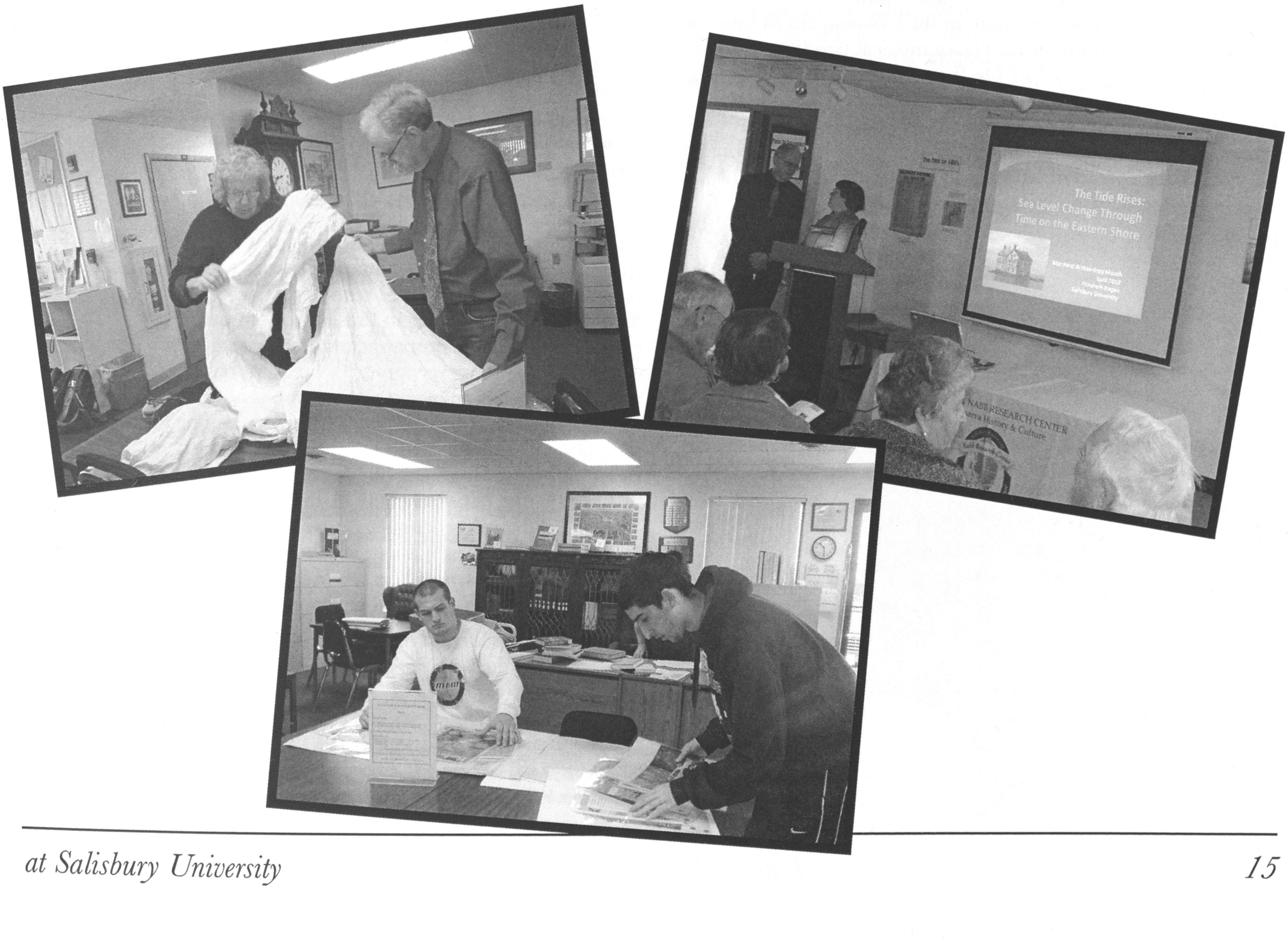
Col. Goldsborough, Daniel Dulaney, Esq. and Stephen Bordley, Esq. wrote a report to Governor Sharpe summarizing the situation. Governor Sharpe went to Philadelphia to state his case that the detainees be released and that Willey and Sharpe and all other Sussex County residents be arrested and turned over to Worcester County authorities for trial. The Marylanders were no doubt released, but Sussex County did not turn anybody over to Maryland. Willey was indicted for first-degree murder, but the charge was reduced to manslaughter.

Page 664 of *Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. III*, printed by Joseph Severns & Co., Philadelphia, 1853, provided the result of a trial held on June 25, 26 and 27 in the courts of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery in Lewes. The Attorney General had laid before the General Inquest an indictment of Willey for murder. The bill was returned endorsed "Ignoramus." An indictment for manslaughter followed. Willey plead guilty, prayed for benefit of clergy and was branded with the letter "M" on the brawn of the left thumb. The court also gave "strict charge to the inhabitants of Sussex in general and the Borderers in particular" to cool it. They were concerned about the high-handed manner with which Worcester County authorities were still harassing Sussex County and requested that the governor of Pennsylvania negotiate with Governor Sharpe to find a way to bring peace to the area.

John Willey moved away from the border.

This article was previously published in the *Delaware Genealogical Society Newsletter*.

An Afternoon at Nabb....



Lancets, Scarificators and Galli-pots: Early Chirurgy and Chirurgeons on the Eastern Shore

By Matthew Hollis

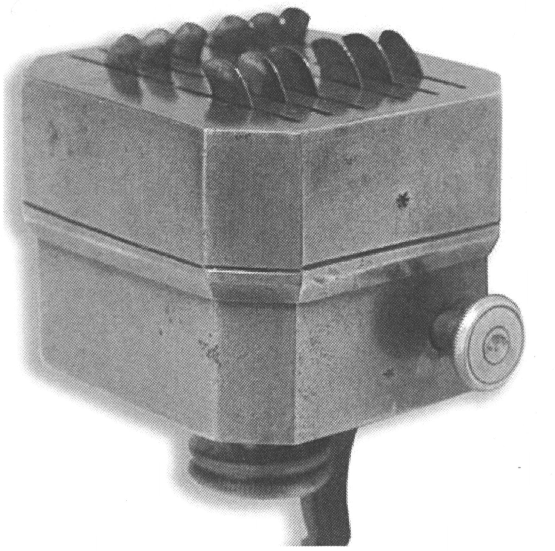
Coming down with a rough bout of influenza? Does the pain in your thigh have you worried about catching "dengue fever?" What if you were told that the most reasonable cure for all that ails you was for a doctor to cut a series of slits along your arms, legs or feet to remove bad blood? How about taking a purgative to "clean out" your system of impurities?

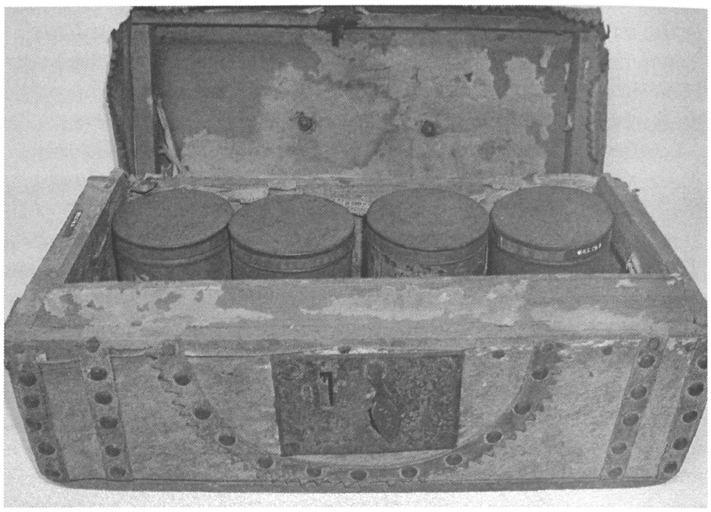
Does this sound cruel and unusual? You may be surprised at how current medical treatments originated from treatments used in the Colonial era. Today's medicine still uses what the Colonial doctors used to call "purgatives" and "expectorants" to clean or flush out unwanted bacteria in the intestines and bowels. Another popular method of fighting all variations of sickness was bleeding a patient, accomplished by making a variety of cuts and incisions on the patient's body. With origins as far back as the Greek physician Aegimious of Eris in 470 B.C., bloodletting through venesection was the most popular form of medical treatment for illness. It is hard to imagine such a common practice as bloodletting (often in large amounts) as having been necessary or even considered practical. Acknowledgment of medicine's evolution is important; without what came first, we might have never reached what we know now.

How does the Eastern Shore in the Colonial era fit into the larger scheme of common European medical practices, and how does one find evidence of it? On the surface, medical knowledge of this era is rare for various reasons. The most obvious is the lack of specific medical procedures mentioned in colonial records. Other reasons include the lack of professionally trained physicians, the spread of unlicensed apothecaries and the lack of laws needed to ensure proper regulation.

To be considered a "physician," the highest rank of medical professional in Colonial America, one had to pass a grueling gauntlet of examinations and study at a university for as long as 14 years. Even if the patient was lucky enough to locate a physician, the physician could demand a hefty fee in exchange for his diagnosis and treatment.

Unable to obtain the proper means to become a physician, many practitioners of early American medicine were shopkeepers who happened to have some knowledge of medicine and treatment. Both shopkeepers and their shops were known as "apothecaries." These apothecaries studied what literature or techniques they could from traveling physicians. Their shops were storage facilities for a wide variety of potions, elixirs and tools used to treat or cure ailments. As apothecaries were common and tended to charge less than physicians, they quickly spread across the seaboard and became valuable institutions within Colonial society.



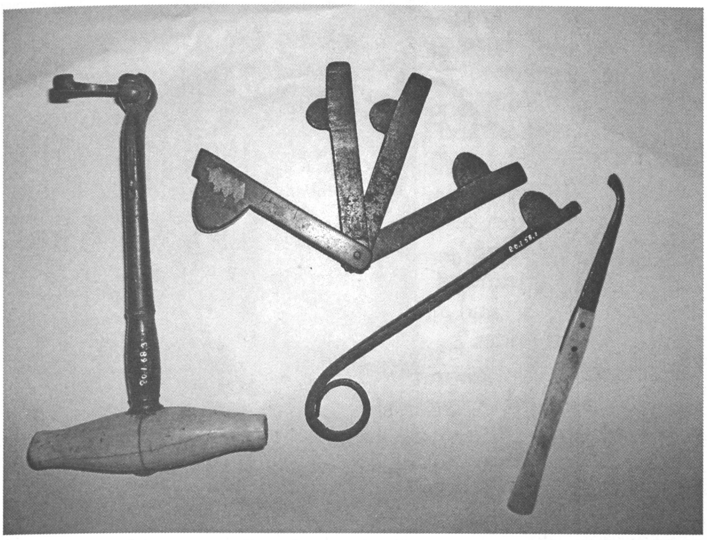


Used as late as the Civil War period, this mid-19th century medical chest contained cans of medical powders. [Wicomico Historical Society Collection, Nabb Research Center]

In fact, apothecaries became so popular that the Colonial government in Virginia was forced to pass a law in 1736 specifically determining what apothecaries could charge their patients for medical services rendered. The 1736 law also included a clear warning to those who sold their own concoctions without proper acknowledgement by a medical expert: "That whenever any pills, bolus, portion, draught … or any medicines, in any form whatsoever, shall be administered to any sick person … the true name thereof shall be expressed in the same bill, together with the quantities and prices, in both cases." Virginia Governor Sir William Gooch later complained in 1729 that he believed many of the so-called physicians in the area had dubious credentials.

What can we learn about apothecaries, chirurgeons and other practitioners of "physick" on our own Eastern Shore? Many clues can be found within Colonial inventories. Descriptions of medical items within these inventories may suggest what their specific

Physicians thought that by decreasing the amount of blood circulating in an inflamed organ, that would lead to an improvement in health. The scarificator was a bleeding instrument that made multiple gashes on the person's skin, causing bleeding. Allowing about 15 ounces of blood to be removed from the body would lead to a relaxed state in the patient bordering on unconsciousness." [Wicomico Historical Society Collection, Nabb Research Center.]



The fleams and lancets are all used to cut the skin to release a certain amount of blood. It was believed that an "excess" of blood in one's system would lead to medical issues and to avoid the symptoms, a person would be bled.

medical trade might have been, and the value of the inventory may suggest the degree of success in the business. Two of the earliest descriptive inventories of medical practitioners in the Delmarva area can be found within the County Court Records of Accomack-Northhampton County, VA.

In 1643, an inventory of Doctor John Holloway contained a collection of "chiururgy and physick" materials. One entry lists "two brasse Morters and pestles." The mortar and pestle basically consisted of a bowl and a heavy cylindrical object that would be used to grind multiple substances into powders. Multiple mortars and pestles indicated that he was active in the creation of medical powders and elixirs.

Holloway also had in his possession a "1 Pint Aquavita Bottle." Aqua vitae (Latin for "water of life") was a concentrated solution of ethanol. Its rarity in Colonial inventories suggests that aqua vitae may have been used as an anesthetic or a calmative. Another Colonial medicine book suggests that aqua vitae was also used to combat sore throats and to heal wounds, as "… a spoonefull thereof … doth presentlie helpe the cough, and horsenes, & breakes the fleame, marvelouslye."

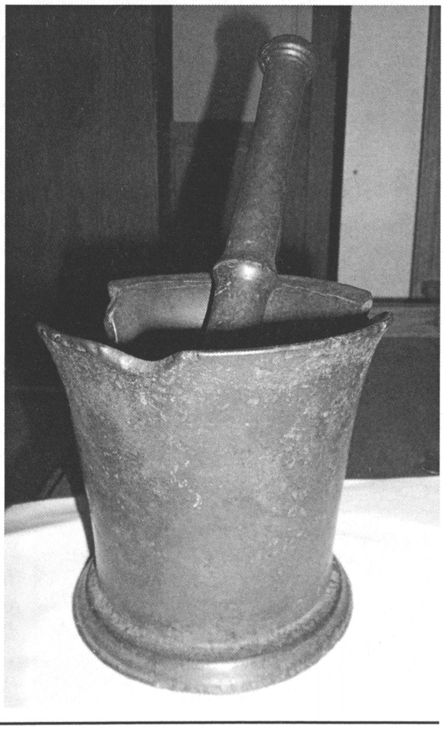
Holloway had been well read; his inventory contains over 30 books, 13 of which were for the practice of "Chirurgery." Given the popularity of the Roman physician Galen up to the Scientific Revolution, books of his findings may have been included in the inventory, along with recent European books and Colonial home remedies. The last medical instruments described in Holloway's inventory include a case of lancets, "Galli-pots" and "glasses with Chirurgical and Phisickall meanes." The glasses referred to may have been vials to hold Holloway's medical concoctions, and the "galli-pots" were earthenware bowls used to hold medicines or ointments or for patients to give the practitioner sputum samples to determine the humoral origin of an infection.

John Severne, of the same county, is specifically listed as a "Chirurgion" in his inventory a year later. Though containing fewer medical tools than Holloway's, Severne's inventory nonetheless contains both a brass and an iron mortar and pestle. Severne also had obtained "1 beacker one salt," suggesting that Severne, like Holloway was engaged in the arts of the apothecary.

What were these two men creating with such an assortment of vials and "beackers"? Two of the primary sicknesses during this period were smallpox and fever. Many "recipes" for administering salves or cordials were brought over from England to effectively treat these illnesses. A "New Compendious Dispensatory" written by London's finest physicians in the 17th century contains a curious recipe for a "decoction of Snake-Root." This decoction contained opiates in the form of liquid laudanum, a "Syrup of Orange-Peels," and "three Drams of Virginia Snake-Root," and was to be used to treat "…Fevers of the more malignant Kind." According to the authors, this concoction was equally effective in ridding bad blood of smallpox, as it would "… (render) the Blood more rapid in its Motion, and by thinning the Humours, will greatly help to promote it." Since Virginia snake-root was plentiful in the colonies, many Colonial apothecaries must have used it frequently to treat common fevers.

But what other ingredients were used in these potions and what illnesses did they treat? Some answers can be found in the 1640 inventory of Richard Wilson. Among the traditional chirurgic instruments, Wilson had amassed a large collection of medicines: a pound of turpentine for use as a general antiseptic, a pound of assorted purgatives to cleanse the bowels of impurities, and various dried bits of spearmint ("Spermantt Desicat") and other herbs. While many of these were used as antiseptics, a number of these ingredients were commonly used as a flavoring or to provide some nutritional benefit when mixed with alcohol.

The inventories of Dr. Holloway, John Severne and Richard Wilson clearly show that much of the medical practice in the colonies involved creating these many salves and curatives. However, this was not the extent of the trade. A mention of a "Case of Lancetts" in Dr. Holloway's inventory suggests that these men were trained in bloodletting. Adapted from the early Roman "phlebotome," the thumb lancet was created in the 15th century and became the primary tool for bloodletting. The thumb lancet's unique design made it far easier for practitioners to perform precise incisions. It contained a middle blade surrounded by two covers made of harder material in the form of a right angle; the two covers were pinned to the blade, allowing a smooth adjustment of the angles to various degrees of inclination. One lancet was not enough to perform a proper bloodletting. Holloway's case of

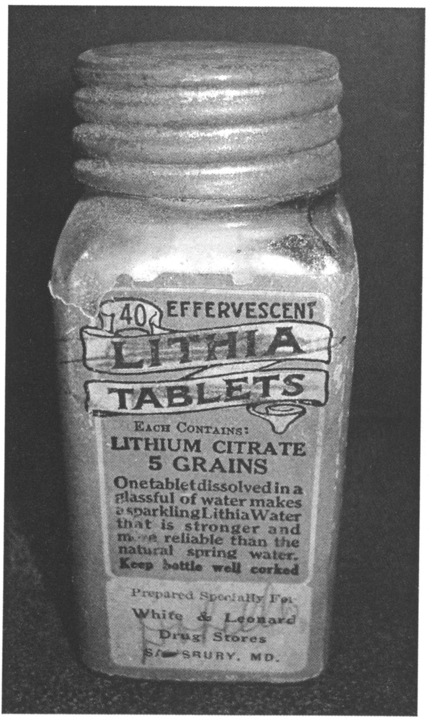


The iron mortar and pestle would have been used by a local pharmacist to grind herbs and medical ingredients to create purgatives or "cure-alls." [Wicomico Historical Society, Nabb Research Center] lancets probably included lancets with thin and delicate blades used solely for puncturing a vein embedded within layers of fatty tissue, as well as thicker and shorter blades used to open large incisions on more easily accessible veins. Another type of bloodletting tool evolved from the "phlebotome" – the fleam. Fleams were largely used in veterinarian practices. As lancets were able to easily pierce human veins, large fleams were used to cut through the harder, tougher hides of horses and cattle.

Mentions of cloth or rods near the chirurgeons' medicinal supplies may suggest other basic tools for bloodletting. Normally the veins near the elbow or the foot were the most popular areas of incision. The patient would normally grab onto a rod or stick to help enlarge the veins, and then the practitioner would administer a carefully placed jab diagonally across the vein. As the vein began to bleed out, the practitioner tightened a cloth tourniquet around the leg or the arm to assist and quicken the flow of blood. Finally, the blood would be collected in either a galli-pot or a "bleeding bowl," in which specific measurements of blood could be taken.

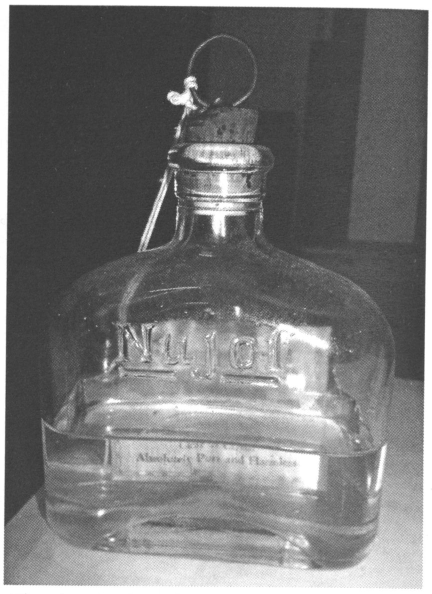
The inventory of Somerset County chirurgeon Alexander Innis in 1686/7 reveals that Eastern Shore doctors were not only using lancets, but alternative bloodletting methods as well. Innis's inventory lists four glister pipes as well as two "cupping glaces." The glister pipes were fairly common tools for the chemist and apothecary; the cupping glasses indicate that Innis had practiced cupping, an alternative to traditional bloodletting.

Cupping has had a traditional use in medicine arguably as long as bloodletting. Cupping was normally used on the elderly, the young and any other patient who was deemed too weak for the lancet. Numerous small incisions would be made on the area to be bled, rather than a larger one straight to the vein by the usual lancet. These tiny incisions were often made by a device known as a scarificator. The scarificator was a device that appeared to be a square block. Multiple tiny blades protruding from one side of the block allowed bloodletters to make a multitude of small incisions simply by running it along the patient's skin. A cup would then be heated by a lamp, candle or torch and quickly placed on the incisions. The heat sealed within created an air-tight vacuum, pulling the blood underneath the skin to the surface and out of the incisions. This method enabled practitioners to determine the cause of the illness without the risk of severing a vein. Innis must have been either popular or experienced, as his inventory contains cups, "surringes"(most likely a non-hypodermic syringe dating back to Blaise Pascal in 1650), three "blood dishes" and a dozen individual lancets.



A popular late 19th century "cure all," Effervescent Lithia Tablets were used to stave off gout, rheumatism and kidney disease. [Wicomico Historical Society Collection, Nabb Research Center]

Innis's inventory also contains one gram of coriander, three grams of zena (what is this?) and a gram of "cantharides." The coriander seed was most likely ground or boiled with water to create a brew rich in antioxidants, effective in treating colds. The gram of cantharides may have been used for a variety of purposes. Also known as "blister bugs" and "Spanish fly," ground cantharides were used to treat warts and had often been the main ingredient of potent aphrodisiacs through the early 19th century. Innis may have been using these cantharides to treat warts and other irritants, and perhaps even for impotence.



The glass bottle with liquid in it is from a local drugstore and contains a heavy oily liquid used to relieve constipation. [Wicomico Historical Society, Nabb Research Center]

Some popular bloodletting methods at the time do not appear in Colonial inventories – for good reason. Use of leeches to suck the blood out of a patient had been a popular alternative method since the second century B.C., and the harvesting of leeches from the Delaware River suggests the practice was just as popular in the colonies as in Europe. Although these leeches were sold primarily directly to the patient, doctors often stocked up on leeches themselves via the apothecary or dispensary and stored them in large, ornate "leech jars." The leeches would then be placed directly on or adjacent to the body part affected by illness; a popular method of treating bronchitis was to place leeches directly on the throat!

The variety of tools, methods and ingredients used by Colonial apothecaries and chirurgeon allowed them to enjoy a degree of financial success, and their popularity among Colonial society made them a respectable cultural institution. As the population of the colonies increased, so did the number of medical practitioners. By the early 18th century, Somerset County itself had two notable practitioners of medicine. The 1725 inventory of Reverend Samuel Davis contains chirurgery and physic books, "Galley potts and vials," "Some medicens," and "apothecary weights." Yet perhaps the most important and illuminating Colonial inventory is that of Dr. William Skirven of Somerset County. Taken in 1721, Skirven's list of items was lengthy enough for the county to create two separate inventories.

The first half of Skirven's inventory covers his parlor chambers, hall, porch chamber, kitchen and an "Old Store." Within this are a staggering amount of empty bottles, paintings and portraits, and other Colonial rarities. Particularly rare entries include a world map and an "Iron Rat Trap." Mentions of paintings above a "mantle place" suggest that Dr. Skirven had died a wealthy man. The mention of an "Old Store" suggests that Skirven had accrued enough income from his primary craft to open a shop. The contents of the shop range from miscellaneous and fancy fabrics, to medicinal products, trapper's tools (1 Wyor Cage, rat traps are a few examples), farming equipment and smithing equipment (multiple mentions of a Smiths' Vice and Hand Vice).

The second half of the inventory mentions his cattle and the "new" areas of his plantation. In the "New Room," Skirven's inventory contains an advanced set of tools used for alchemy and chemistry. One limbeck (alembic) and a number of bottles for raw materials suggest that Skirven was very experienced in creating elixirs. The "New Room" also includes a pair of "Horse Fleams," indicating that Skirven might have conducted various veterinarian duties over his lifetime. Lastly, Skirven's "New Room" inventory mentions "Instruments for mending watches." An astonishing 166 books are in Skirven's inventory. Included in this massive number is a book on Maryland law, the first volume of "Mr. Flawell's work" and two books called "Cook's Reports."

This glass container from White and Leonard's Store in Salisbury, MD, once contained a highly alcohol-based "medicine" sold to cure one's ills. [Wicomico Historical Society, Nabb Research Center]

Worth over 730 pounds sterling, Dr. Skirven died one of the wealthiest men on the Eastern Shore, but the immensity and diversity of his inventory creates more questions than answers. Was he primarily a doctor or a trader? Besides his formal title in certain documents, evidence within his will indicates both a sister and a Thomas Brown (son?) in Scotland, who was specified within the will as having been "in Glasgow for his education." Skirven may be referring to the University of Glasgow, which was renowned for its focus on both human and veterinarian medicinal studies. Having a sister in Scotland suggests some socio-economic ties to the Old World. Had Skirven been able to out-compete other apothecaries, gaining access to rare materials through a Scottish relative? Had Skirven attended the Glasgow University himself, having his fingers on the pulse of current European medicine?

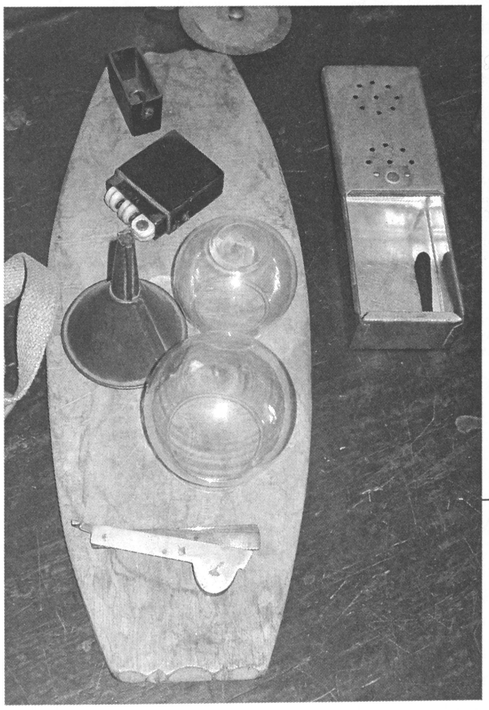
Though much of Skirven's history still remains to be uncovered, what is certain is that Skirven is an example of how successful the Colonial apothecary could become. Apothecaries would remain in high demand until they were replaced by druggist stores and early pharmacies in the 19th century.

One chirurgeon on the Eastern Shore was even involved in a mysterious outbreak of sickness amongst his family. The 1688 inventory of Ann Smith of Somerset County contains a list of debts owed by Smith and her family to one Dr. "John Vigerous," who, coincidentally, was Ann's son-in-law and husband to the younger Ann Smith. The list of debts include charges for "Physick and attendance" to multiple members of the Smith family. Treatments included cordials of cinnamon, a cordial of "cooling dersion," several other cordials for "fainting fits," bloodletting, a "pectoral ungent," a"mustard plaster" and the applications of bolus to stimulate antibodies. Vigorous' treatment of the Smiths was of great length and cost to him. Several charges in the account are for Vigorous' "charges and trouble" and "my owne trouble and losse of time." The account also separates the patients by name and the year they were treated: Edward and Joseph Smith were treated in 1686, and Ann was treated two years later. All of these treatments were to no avail; Ann Smith, two of her sons and her husband died within the same time period during Vigorous's treatments.

John Vigorous' "charges and trouble" did not end with the death of his mother-in-law. In a letter defending his absence from the Somerset County Court on March 9, 1689/90, Vigorous describes the nature of his wife's sickness: "... she is not long for this life, she is in a dangerous & desparate condition and all her head and face seems as if it were perishing, all swold up and perish as it swells, with severall other daingerous Symtoms ..." Had this been a wave of disease spreading within the community? Had John Vigorous misdiagnosed the nature of the Smith family's illness? The disappearance of John Vigorous from Somerset County records only three years later adds to the mysterious nature of this incident. Had Vigorous succumbed to an illness that chirurgy could not treat?

Chirurgeons on the Eastern Shore were engaged in the art of healing, but produced very different results. Many chirurgeons used lancets, others used cupping. Some became incredibly wealthy by the time of their death, others died poor. John Severne's inventory shows that chirurgeons could be men of many different trades. The account of Ann Smith and John Vigorous's defense in court shows that even with a chirurgeon's best efforts, many people died from illness, and perhaps some died even by the means to treat their affliction. Despite the very different lives these men led, the demand for their services confirmed that the apothecary, the doctor and the chirurgeon were honored members of respected colonial institutions.

Matthew Hollis is a recent SU graduate and former graduate assistant at the Nabb Center.



Glass galli-pots were used in 19th century medical treatment. [Wicomico Historical Society, Nabb Research Center]

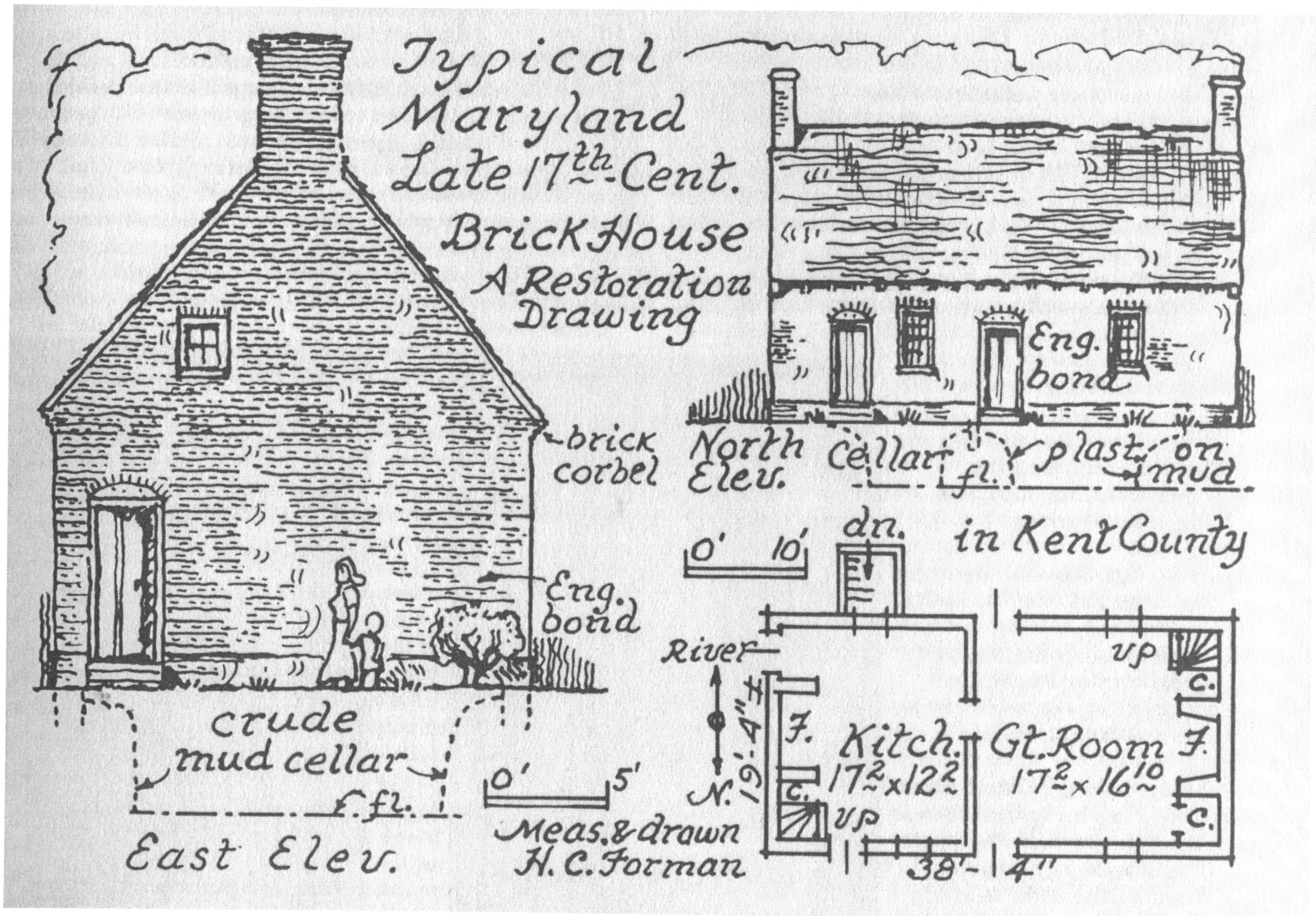
Discovery of the Givan House at Rewastico

by Christopher J. Hagert

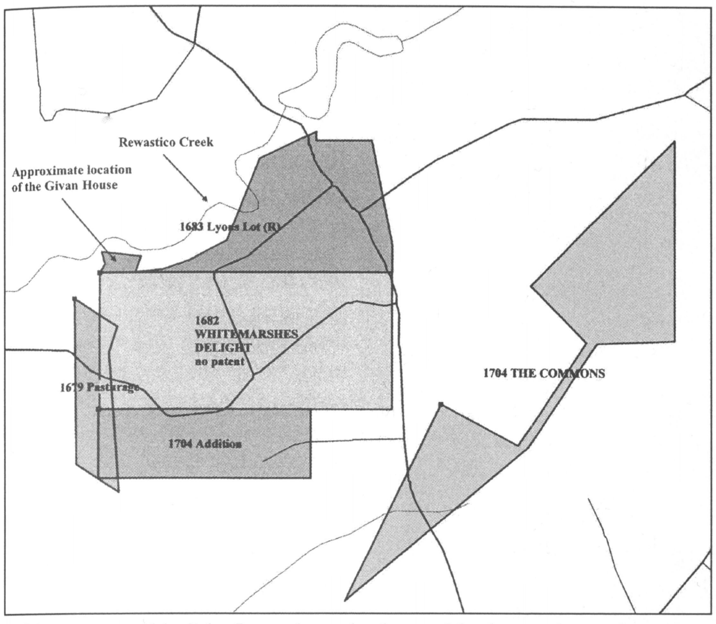
For those interested in early architecture of the Tidewater region, the counties of the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland have much to offer. Many of these historic plantation houses are still standing. Some of them have been restored to their former glory like Rackliffe House in Worcester County, others are in the process of being restored like Handsell in Dorchester County, and still others yearn for restoration like Genesar also in Worcester County. However, many of the lower Shore's plantation houses disappeared long ago and live only in books and records. One such house is that of Captain James Givan, a Colonial-era merchant-planter who lived "at Rewastico" in present-day Wicomico County in the late 1600s and early 1700s.

The lower Eastern Shore of Maryland is comprised of three counties – Somerset, Worcester and Wicomico. Somerset was the original Lower Shore county founded in 1666. It encompassed present-day Worcester and Wicomico counties and also the southern part of present-day Sussex County, DE. In James Givan's time, Old Somerset was his county of residence and where he owned his land, but today, all of his landholdings would be located in northwest Wicomico and southern Sussex counties.

James Givan (later Givans) first appears in the records of Old Somerset in 1688 when he and his brother Robert registered their cattle marks. They made their first land acquisitions about a year later and continued acquiring land well into the 1720s. In many cases, James Givan coordinated his land purchases with his brother Robert and their brother-in-law Thomas Gordon, who had married their sister Mary. In their lifetimes, these gentlemen together acquired several thousand acres of land in Old Somerset east of the Nanticoke River. Between 1690 and 1704, James and Robert acquired a cluster of land tracts on the south bank of Rewastico Creek where they settled their home plantations and raised families. This cluster was about 1,000 acres in size and included the following land tracts: Lyons Lot, Whitemarshes Delight, The Commons, Pasturage and Addition. The core of their dwelling plantations were the two adjoining tracts of land known as Lyons Lot and



A depiction of a late 17th century Maryland Tidewater brick house, similar to what the Givan House may have looked like. From Maryland Architecture: A Short History from 1634 through the Civil War *by H. Chandlee Forman.*



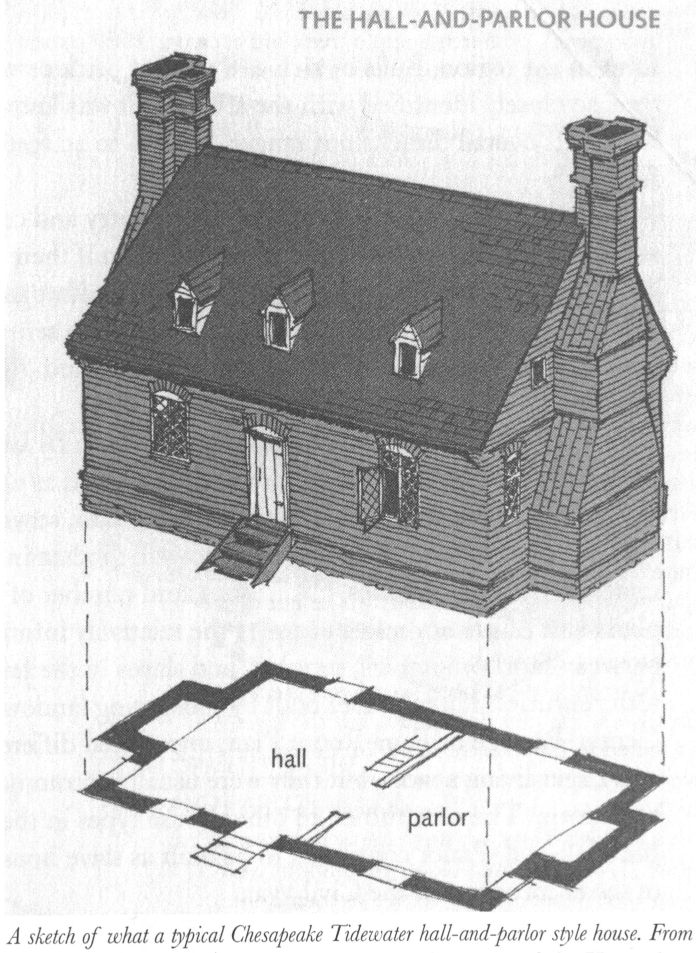
This map, created by John Lyon, shows the cluster of land tracts that made up James and Robert Givan's home plantations in Rewastico.

Whitemarshes Delight, which the brothers divided equally between them. James resided on the west side of these tracts, and Robert on the east side, separated by a stream or ditch. These tracts are presently located in Wicomico County about 2 or 3 miles north of the village of Quantico, or about 10 miles west of Salisbury.

As someone with an interest in the early architecture of Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, and as a descendant of James Givan, I have long been interested in finding out what type of house he lived in at Rewastico. But in researching the matter, I'd never run across any architectural histories of the region connecting any plantation houses to James Givan or the Givan family. Likewise, I'd never found any detailed reference to the type of house that James Givan inhabited at Rewastico in his will, estate inventories, tax records or land transactions. This was pretty discouraging because although James Givan was not a uniquely wealthy planter in relation to his peers by any stretch, records show that he probably had had the means to build a quality house, perhaps one of brick, characteristic of those of other prosperous planters in Old Somerset.

It is believed that James Givan came to Old Somerset from Northern Ireland at some point before 1688. In the last few decades of the 1600s, there was a migration of Presbyterian Scots-Irish to Old Somerset County. This group sought to escape English persecution of Presbyterians, whom the English had termed "dissenters." It is probable that James Givan and his siblings came to Old Somerset as a part of this wave. James Givan is characterized in the records of Old Somerset as "tanner" and "planter." As a tanner, he likely purchased furs and skins from the local Nanticoke Indians and processed them at a tannery on his plantation for sale to the market. James probably also derived income from harvesting and selling tobacco and timber from his home plantation and investment properties, and renting out land to tenants, among other activities. He was the constable of the Nanticoke Hundred in the 1690s and is styled also as "gentleman" and "captain," indicating his social status and role in the local militia. Like many Colonial settlers of this period, James Givan appears to have been a man of humble origins who wore many hats during his lifetime – tanner, planter, farmer, trader, landlord, militiaman and local officeholder – ultimately becoming a success in the New World. At the time of his death in 1724, James Givan left to his wife Martha and eight children a fairly substantial estate, including a great deal of land, his house and dependencies, 10 or more slaves, horses and livestock, tools and equipment, and other valuable personalty.

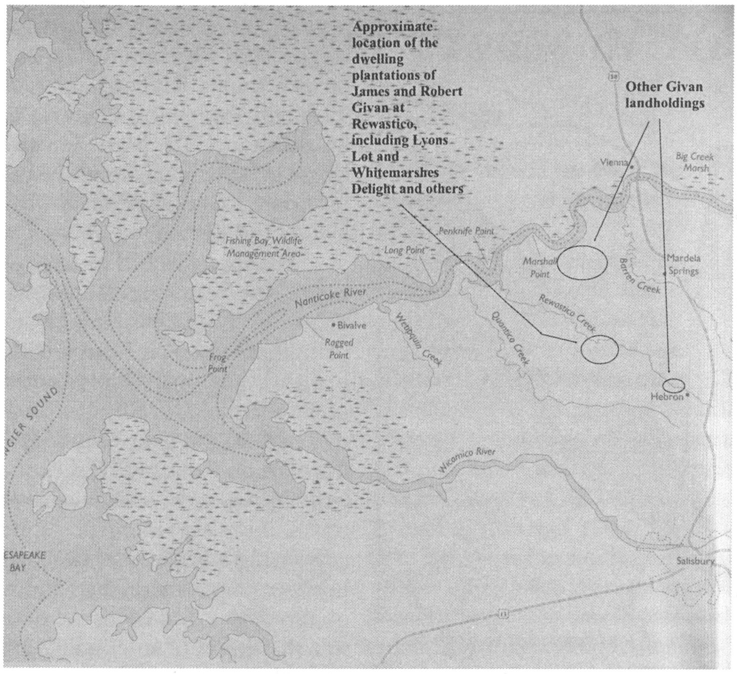
The most detail I've been able to find on James Givan's house was from his will and estate inventories. In his will, James bequeaths to his son James II, among other property, "the plantation whereon I dwell with the following tracts belonging to it, Lyons Lot and Whitemarshes Delight." But the will contains no indication as to the style and location of his house. Of these two core tracts, Lyons Lot may have contained more river frontage on Rewastico Creek than the other, and since most early homes were built on the water for ease of commerce and travel, this tract emerged as the most likely candidate for containing a house site. His estate inventories enumerate a number of personal items and pieces of furniture that suggest a quality house, but no house description is offered therein. So that was the extent of my findings. Since I'd been unsuccessful in unearthing any significant reference to a James Givan plantation house on my own, I sought professional help from a well-known expert in Old Somerset land records and deed mapping. My expectation was that, if anything, I'd get an opinion that no such



A sketch of what a typical Chesapeake Tidewater hall-and-parlor style house. From American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home *by Gerald Foster.*

reference exists, enabling me to move on to other pursuits. The expert reviewed my research and findings and then conducted his own analysis of Old Somerset land and other records. After a few weeks of this, a discovery was made that exceeded my expectations in a document recorded almost 40 years after the death of James Givan:

> Dwelling house 20x30 w. brick walls; 2 brick chimneys; 2 plank floors; 2 rooms on lower floor much out of repair; kitchen 16x12 w. inside brick chimney built w. sawed logs; old indifferent kitchen w. brick chimney; stable house 12x12; hen house w. 12x10 round poles; corn house 10x5 of round pole logs; 400 ft. old pailing (indifferent); 13 apple trees, young orchard; 5 apple trees, old orchard; 1900 panels of old fence; pear tree; plum tree; peach orchard; 5 apple trees, old orchard; 1900 panels of old fence; pear tree; plum tree; peach tree.



This map shows the approximate locations of some of the landholdings of James and Robert Givan in present-day Wicomico County. From The Nanticoke: Portrait of a Chesapeake River *by David W. Harp and Tom Horton.*

The above house description was found in a 1763 assessment of Lyons Lot, which by that time had passed to the grand-nephew of James Givan, the orphaned William Givan. Recall that James Givan and his family had resided on the western halves of Lyons Lot and Whitemarshes Delight as early as 1690 for over 30 years. So what had been discovered at Lyons Lot, right where James Givan had settled, was a substantial two-room, one-and-a-half story, hall-and-parlor style house of brick with a pair of brick chimneys, typical of what planters of some means in the Chesapeake Tidewater region would have built in James Givan's time. The assessment does not indicate when the house was built or by whom, but the fact that in 1763 there are references to the lower rooms being "much out of repair" and a kitchen and orchard being "old" suggests that the homeplace had been around for quite awhile, probably for many years. It is therefore possible that this house had been built and inhabited by James Givan and his family in the last decade of the 1600s and/or the first couple of decades of the 1700s. It was an encouraging discovery.

No evidence has been found yet directly linking it to James Givan as its builder or resident, but the house can very likely be attributed to James Givan and/or his son James II. As mentioned previously, neither James' will nor his estate inventories describe the house, and the 1763 assessment does not date the house or cite a builder. Thus, we don't know if James built it, or his son James II, or even later Givan generations who came to own Lyons Lot. Upon getting settled at their home plantations, early settlers typically built their first house of wood, which they (or later generations) replaced with a more substantial one of brick if their means allowed after they became more established and successful. If James built the brick house between 1690 and 1724 during his lifetime at Rewastico, then the house James II inherited at his father's death in 1724 would have been the brick one described herein. But, the house James II inherited could have been a timber-frame precursor to the brick house that he, James II, replaced with brick during his ownership. In any event, James or James II are probably the two most likely builders of the Givan House.

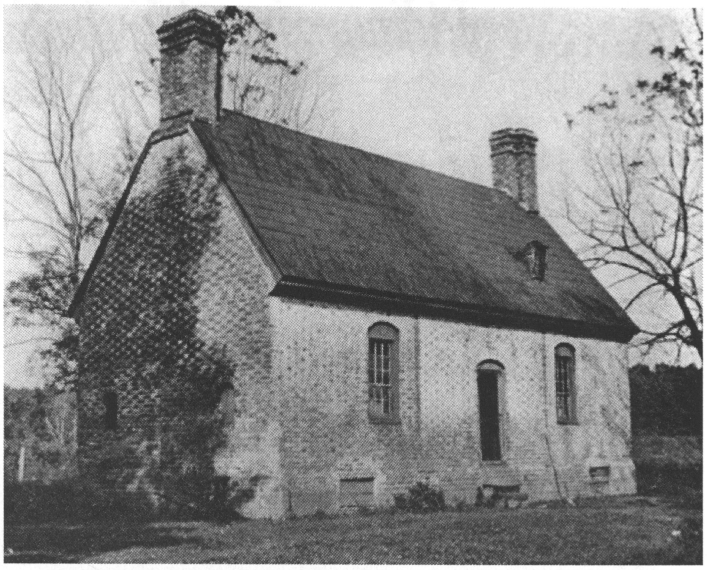
After passing from James II's ownership and some in-family land sales, the west end of Lyons Lot and the house ended up in the hands of James' nephew Robert II, his brother Robert's son. But Robert II met an untimely and mysterious demise from an illness in 1748 around the age of 40. On his deathbed, Robert II bequeathed by noncupative will (i.e. a verbal will before witnesses) the west end of Lyons Lot to his only son William, a 2-year old baby at the time. Fifteen years later in 1763, when the orphaned William would have been about 17 years old, an evaluation of William's property was conducted to determine its value. It was in this 1763 evaluation that the description of the Givan House was discovered. William would have been the grand-nephew of James Givan. The orphan William is indicated as having moved to Boston by 1770, and the trail ends there for now, pending further research.

Sadly, the Givan House is no longer standing, although its approximate location has been determined. Additional research may reveal when it was built and by whom, how long it stood, and what ultimately happened to it. James Givan first settled in Old Somerset about 322 years ago at the time of this writing. Since that time, families have migrated elsewhere, abandoning their homeplaces, large tracts of land have changed hands and undergone boundary modifications, and river courses and land uses have changed. The Givan House, among many other houses of the lower Shore, probably fell victim to one or more of these factors. The people who currently live on the land where the house once stood (almost on the exact house site) have not responded to letters and phone calls inquiring about the existence of any physical evidence of the house.

If the Givan House were still standing today, it probably would be considered a historically significant structure, just by virtue of its location and its immediate neighbors. Lyons Lot and Whitemarshes Delight and the other cluster of tracts that comprised James and Robert's home plantations were situated literally in the midst of active Nanticoke Indian settlements and trading posts. Asquatch, the Supreme Emperor of the Nanticokes at the time James Givan resided here, was known to have occupied a village in close proximity to the Givan brothers' home plantations. Further, within the boundaries of James Givan's Whitemarshes Delight tract, there was a place known as the Emperor's Landing, a regular embarkation point for canoes of the Nanticokes and their emperor. James Givan almost certainly used this landing as his home plantation's primary wharf. This spot is later known as James Givan's Lower Landing and Ship's Landing. Also, a few miles by water from James Givan's home plantation was another Nanticoke village called Puckamee, across the river from the Chicone Nanticoke reservation near present-day Vienna in Dorchester County. Thus, the Emperor Asquatch and his Nanticoke people would have been close neighbors and trading partners of James and Robert Givan for many years.

Who knows what role the Givan House may have played during this significant Contact Period on the lower Shore, when European settlers first encountered the Native Americans of this area? Was James Givan acquainted with Emperor Asquatch? Had he ever entertained the Emperor at the Givan House? Further research on the house and the lives and activities of James and Robert Givan, and the other nearby settlers and their homes, is a subject worthy of additional academic study.

Christopher J. Hagert lives in Loudoun County, VA, with his wife and two young children. His father's ancestors settled in Old Somerset County, MD, in the mid-1600s.



Warburton House, an example of a brick hall-and-parlor style house of the late 1600s located in Tidewater Virginia. This is what the Givan House might have looked like.

All in an Afternoon at Nabb…

Wicomico High School Class of 1948

By William Palmer

WICOMICO HIGH SCHOOL, SALISBURY, MD.

In 1948, I was always hungry. I was a 16-year-old country boy from Powellville with no money. The cheapest dish on the menu in the cafeteria at Wicomico High School was vegetable soup. It was homemade, it was hot, and it smelled good. I was always hungry for vegetable soup when I went to the cafeteria at lunchtime, but only on the rare days when I won at matching pennies with the gamblers in Homeroom 5, only on those days, did I order the vegetable soup. One winter day in the cafeteria, I was huddled over a bowl of steaming vegetable soup when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I looked up and standing there was my homeroom teacher Helen Porter. I put the soup spoon down and stood to face her. "You're slurping your soup," she said. "Don't slurp your soup when you're eating!" I turned red in the face and after saying, "Yes, ma'am!" I sat down again.

From that day hence, whenever I had money for lunch, I passed up the vegetable soup and chose a slice of homemade cream pie: banana cream, coconut cream or chocolate cream. They were all good and I could eat them without the fear of another reprimand from Helen Porter.

Now 60 years later, even as I look back with glaucoma and cataracts, I see clearly the fastball that Norris Carey threw to strike out the last batter and earn an undefeated season for the 1948 Wi Hi Indians baseball team. I still clearly see all the rowdy boys and the ruddy faced girls from the farms and timberlands of Mt. Hermon, Shavox and Powellville. I see them as they scramble aboard Bus No. 5 driven by Mr. Murray Walston. I still see the jaunty, freshly-scrubbed boys and the smiling, sweet-smelling girls from the grand houses and tenements of the streets of Salisbury. And the teachers: I still see Sam Seidel at the gym, Mr. Cordrey walking the halls, Mr. Dalton Howard in the lab, Helen Porter at the typewriter, and the Warren sisters, stern and determined that we get our homework in on time.

But suddenly we were graduating, and after only 11 years of study. We were triumphant then and happy too. The war was over; we had cleared hurdles of homework and grades, and graduated from the long corridors and steep steps of Wicomico High School. Release from academic rigors was sweet. The world was ours. And Salisbury was our town.

I left Salisbury for the army and other pursuits, and when I returned in 1970, just over 20 years later, time had erased many vestiges of our past glory. Time had erased the Saturday night dances at the Salisbury Armory. Time had erased Read's Drugstore and other soda fountains with the tuna sandwiches and chocolate zips. Gone were the movie theaters: the Arcade, the Wicomico and the Ulman. Time had erased the Saturday night crowds on Main Street, the Wicomico Hotel, the passenger trains, the pool hall and the bowling alleys where we used to gather.

Even the old Wicomico High School was gone – not the building but the character and the gaiety that once gave it life. No more Field Days with the screams and laughter of dodge ball games and races. No more May Days with fair maidens dancing around the May Pole, with its streaming banners and bright ribbons. No more graduations after 11 grades and no more homemade cream pies.

Still, after all these years, whenever I eat soup I am careful to sip, not slurp, for I still remember Helen Porter looking down at me and saying, "You're slurping your soup!"

William Palmer, a native of the Eastern Shore and long-time chair of the Modern Languages Department at Salisbury University, lives in retirement in New Mexico, although he writes frequently on Eastern Shore subjects and remembers with fondness growing up in rural Worcester County.

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The Forgotten Land of Somerset County, Maryland

By William B. Payne

Though I have been visiting the Eastern Shore for many years (80), I had never lived there until I retired here in Delaware. I began to trace my family roots and slowly discovered the history of the area. Very early in my ancestry research, I discovered that other counties had grown out of Old Somerset County, which was divided into three counties, Worcester in 1742 and Wicomico in 1867, as well as present-day Somerset. I soon learned that the time frame of these divisions was as important as the land area that had been divided. Since I hit many roadblocks caused by these county boundary changes, I then had to search records in another county and started using the MDGenWeb site to understand the mapping of the boundaries of the counties and their hundreds. I assume others have also used this genealogy Web site.

Let's take a walk through the history of the Eastern Shore to discover this forgotten land. First, it's important to note that the boundaries have shifted many times over the 400 years of English settlement on the Delmarva Peninsula, which is now occupied by portions of Virginia and Maryland, and the whole of Delaware. In Colonial Maryland, there were many boundary changes. This region was first divided into two areas, namely, Kent County, located above the Choptank River, and also the Eastern Shore, which ran from the Choptank River to the Virginia Colony. Somerset County was first divided out of the Eastern Shore from the Nanticoke River to the Virginia Colony, followed by Dorchester County from the Nanticoke River to the Choptank River. "The limits of Somerset and Dorchester counties extended eastwardly to the Delaware Bay and included that part of Delaware, now called Sussex County" (Jones, 1902).

The Duke of York, the future King James II, of England, acquired the Dutch colony; the king in 1685 granted the land along the Delaware Bay to the Quaker William Penn. The early Colonial years were an era of turmoil among the royalty of England, and this turmoil spilled over into the Maryland Colony. To quote Elias Jones again, "On the 26th of February, 1635, the first legislative body of the colony met in a log fort at St. Mary's." The first assembly of delegates met with frequent disruptions of its meetings until it moved to Annapolis in 1695; these disruptions even included physical assaults from the Virginia colonists. During this time period, Dorchester County was established (1669), as evidenced on the Dorchester County Seal.

Buried deep within the history are descriptions of the areas of Dorchester. One such area was Crotcher's Ferry (Brookview), on the North West Fork of the Nanticoke River; before there was Nanticoke Hundred, a ferry, though not a town, was established in 1671 and grew to what is now Brookview. Another area of Dorchester making its debut at this time was Galestown, "a little cluster of modest dwellings situated in the southeastern part of Fork District," where "the quickening influence of the locomotive whistles is too far away to excite commotion in this town on the arrival of trains at the nearest railroad station. Only steamboats on the river induce the people to make use of rapid transit in their business with the outside world."

Furthermore, there was the Fork District – this was the "Forgotten Land" of Somerset County on the Eastern Shore subsequently transferred to Dorchester County (1684) and is not shown on Colonial maps referred to today. Jones states:

> Fork District, one of the eight Election Districts of Dorchester County, laid out in 1829, was an early settled section, mostly along the Nanticoke River on its eastern boundary, and the North West Fork River, that divided what was then called Nanticoke Hundred. Until 1684 Somerset County claimed all that part of Nanticoke Hundred lying east of the North West Fork branch of the Nanticoke. In November of that year, the Council of Maryland appointed a commission, [consisting of] Col. William Stevens, Capt. Henry Smith, Bartholomew Ennalls and Charles Hutchins, to settle the bounds between Somerset and Dorchester Counties. They decided that the North East branch is the main stream of the Nanticoke River, and therefore the boundary between the counties, which had been for years in dispute. Some of the people then living in North West Fork claimed to be citizens of Somerset, and others to be living in Dorchester.

While the Fork District is not noted for any important towns, it is reputed for being the home of some distinguished and prominent families.

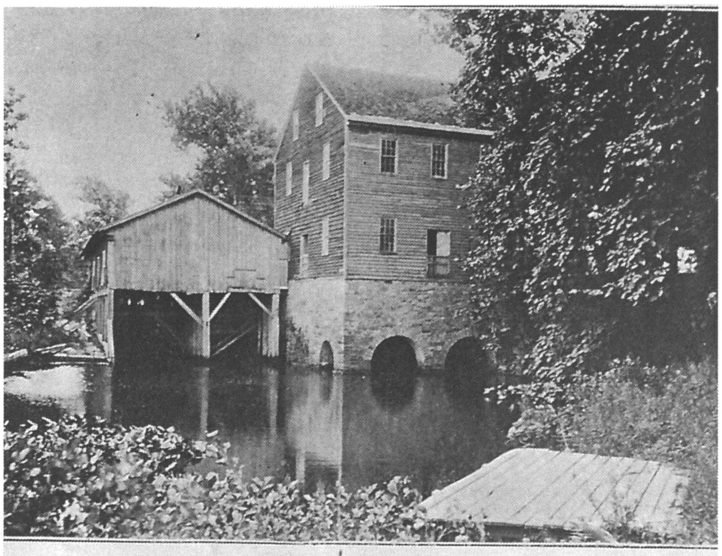
Rehoboth, a large plantation consisting of 2,350 acres, was patented to Capt. John Lee on June 24, 1673, a member of the Lee family of Virginia, "one of the most prominent and influential families that ever came to America." Rehoboth, about 7 miles from Federalsburg, lay within sight of Brookview on the North West Fork River.

Another important area was Nanticoke Manor, one of whose early settlers was William Lowe. His great-grandson Enoch Lowe had a special warrant granted to resurvey "Taylor's Neglect" in 1758 and "some vacant land adjoining 'to be holden of the Nanticoke Manor.'" Jones states that this grant of land shows the great extent of the Nanticoke Manor up the North West Fork. In the Warrant Ledger of Francis Jenkins, 1670-1682, transcribed by G. Ray Thompson, and primarily a surveyor's record book, Nanticoke Manor of c. 1674 is described as being 6,000 acres in extent, near the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek. Some historians place Nanticoke Manor by Vienna; however, the above description correctly places the Manor of Nanticoke in the Fork District, the so-called "Forgotten Land" of Somerset, as stated above. The Fork District lies between the North West Fork and the North East Fork (now the Nanticoke River), and it is not on any Colonial Somerset maps that I have seen. This large area (east of the North West Fork that passes just east of Federalsburg then up Marshyhope Creek to Delaware) was part of the Nanticoke Hundred, Somerset County, before 1684. I wonder why Somerset historians and/or genealogists overlooked this important part of Somerset County, since it affects a large region in which the histories and genealogy of Somerset, Dorchester and Sussex counties overlap?

William B. Payne, a "come here," is a passionate writer about Delmarva history.

The Rider-Huston-Dashiell Cemetery

By Betty Murrell, James Trader and G. Ray Thompson

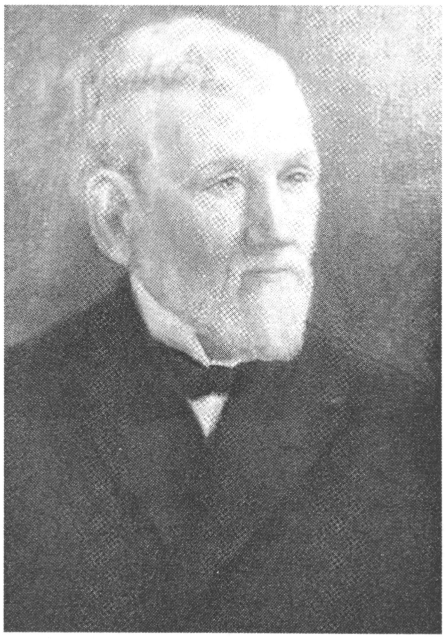


YE OLD MILL—TONY TANK.

Throughout the Roman Empire, roads leading to every city and village were lined with funeral monuments. Later, Europeans often chose to bury their dead in or around churches – parish or cathedral. Still later, Colonial Chesapeakers, lacking towns, buried their dead on their own properties, creating family cemeteries, which at times continued in use for many generations. Such is the Rider-Huston-Dashiell Cemetery.

Usually known as the Rider Cemetery, this well-maintained resting place of generations of members of prominent Salisbury families is hidden away from the hustle and bustle of nearby Camden Avenue traffic on the shore of Tony Tank Lake. Over the years the cemetery had fallen into disrepair, but within recent years, it has been well maintained and its stones cared for through a perpetual endowment. Long-time historians and cemetery preservationists James Trader and Betty Murrell have researched the cemetery and placed their records relating to it at the Nabb Research Center.

In 2004, Mr. Trader described the property as "located on a tree-shaded ridge overlooking the once-beautiful Tony Tank Lake." The occupants of the Rider Cemetery read like an honor role of Salisbury's leading families – including the Riders, Hustons and Dashiells. What by the 20th century was a quiet, off-the-beaten-path cemetery was part of a thriving business center in the 1700s, with houses, stores, grist mills, saw mills plus a large shipbuilding industry. It was a deep water port at the time and large ships came from all over the world, making Tony Tank a very busy place.



Governor Elihu E. Jackson

The most ancient of the burials in the cemetery is that of Captain Robert Dashiell, who lived between 1745 and 1814. Born in Stepney Parish, in what was then Somerset County, he was the son of Mitchell and Mary Dashiell. In 1765, Robert built a mill at Tony Tank and served as a Justice of the Peace in 1774. Later, during the Revolutionary War, "Captain Robert" was a mariner and commander of several vessels. He commanded the sloop *Betsey* in 1776, the galley *Chester* in 1778, during which he received a hip wound from a cannon ball, and the schooner *Lady Lee* in 1780.

Robert married Isabella Kellam (Killam), daughter of John Kellam and his wife Sarah McClester Kellam. The couple had four children, Ann, Sarah, Archibald and Peter. Ann was born on December 5, 1779, and died on September 5, 1800. Sarah, born on December 3, 1775, died on December 29, 1853; both Ann and Sarah are buried in marked graves in the Rider Cemetery. Trader did a probe of the site and also discovered several unmarked gravesites. One of these he believes may be that of Archibald Dashiell (born March 3, 1773).

Additional underground vaults might be those of Peter Dashiell, born on March 1, 1771, who died on May 9, 1819, and his wife Priscilla Kellam, born in 1783 who died in 1829, and who was a cousin of his mother Isabella. Through this union, Peter and Priscilla became the parents of seven children, Robert Napoleon, Edward, Ann, John Huston, Priscilla, Sarah and Isabella. Peter, like his father, became a prominent Salisbury citizen. Peter was also an active Mason, serving as the Master of Salisbury Lodge No. 57 in 1815. Education was important in the Dashiell family and Peter served as a Trustee of Washington Academy in Somerset County. Following a pattern established by his father, Peter made many land transactions in both Somerset and Worcester counties, among which was the 1804 purchase of Poplar Hill, then a substantial plantation, from the estate of Major John Handy, later selling it to his brother-in-law Dr. John Huston, who completed the construction of the Federal-style mansion, the oldest surviving structure in Salisbury.

Dr. Huston married Peter Dashiell's sister Sarah, and the couple lived at Poplar Hill, raising their family there, and both were eventually buried in the Rider Cemetery at Tony Tank. In time, the property belonging to Poplar Hill was carved up and sold. Isabella and Elizabeth streets in Newtown are thought to have been named after John and Sarah's daughters, Elizabeth and Isabella. Isabella married Cathell Humphreys as his second wife, while Elizabeth married first Washington Bennett and secondly Thomas B. Robertson. Another daughter, Sally E., died unmarried and was buried along with her parents in the Tony Tank Cemetery. Yet another daughter, Ann Dashiell Huston, married William Washington Handy.

After the death of Peter Dashiell, the land passed from Dashiell hands to another Somerset countian, Noah Rider, a man who is credited with founding the Salisbury Masonic Order and was the owner of large tracts of land on the lower Eastern Shore as early as 1817. Noah married Elizabeth Byrd and continued his real estate investments in the Salisbury area. In 1830 and again in 1838, he purchased some of Peter Dashiell's extensive landholdings. Camden Avenue was known at one time as the "road to Noah's Rider's mill," so it is quite possible that Noah Rider lived on the Tony Tank property, the site of Honeysuckle Lodge, until his death in 1865. Noah Rider's sister Mary married Robert Dashiell in 1819; he was the son of John Dashiell and Sarah Killam Handy, a sister of Isabella Killam Dashiell, wife of the older Robert Dashiell and mother of Peter Dashiell. This later Robert Dashiell, like the older Robert and his son Peter, was involved in land transactions and had borrowed money from his brother-in-law Charles Rider in 1840. Unable to repay the loan, the younger Robert lost most of his property, including the land that his wife, Mary, had inherited from her mother Mary Rider Aydelotte. In this way, the land had passed from the Dashiell to the Rider family.

Margaret Ann Rider, daughter of Noah and Elizabeth Byrd Rider, in 1846 married a widower by the name of William Hearne Rider. Although this family of Riders is buried in Parsons Cemetery in Salisbury, along with two of their children, their daughter Emma F. Rider is buried at Tony Tank Cemetery.

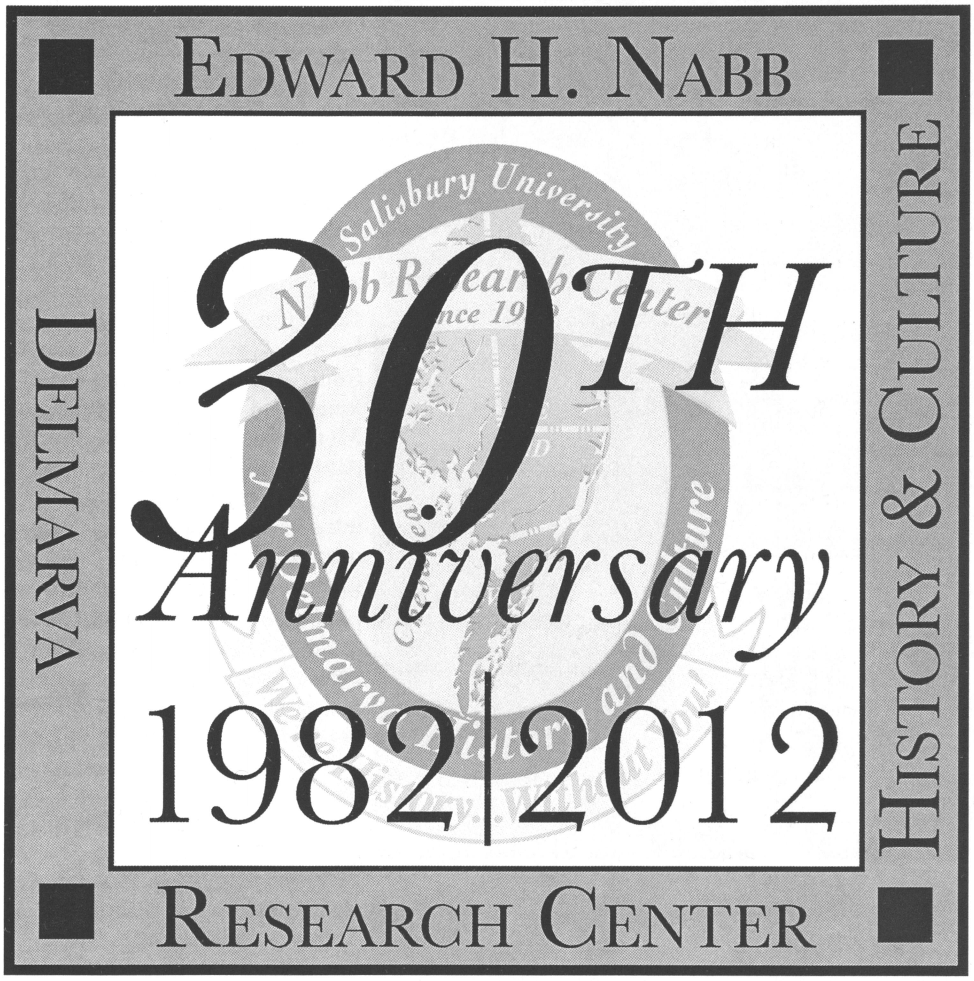
John Byrd Rider, born in 1867, the same year Wicomico County was carved out of Somerset and Worcester counties, was the son of Margaret and William Hearne Rider. He lived at Honeysuckle Lodge and owned all the mill rights and land under Tony Tank Lake, extending from Camden Avenue east to the railroad. In his 1924 will, John provided for an endowment for perpetual maintenance of the Rider Cemetery.

Coincidentally, John Byrd Rider's sister Annie married Elihu Emory Jackson, who became Governor of Maryland from 1888-1892 and was the founder of Asbury United Methodist Church in Salisbury. Also worthy of remark is that this property was later inherited by a descendant who married the American humorous poet Ogden Nash, who spent a considerable time at the site, creating his poetry imagery.

Noah Rider himself is buried in the cemetery along with his wife Elizabeth Byrd River and five of their eight children, John Byrd Rider, Dr. T.W.P. Rider, Henry Harrison Rider, Dr. Noah S. Rider and his wife Amanda Taylor, and George W. Rider and his wife Melissa Jones. They are the last members of the extended Rider-Dashiell-Huston family to be buried at the site, which remains well-cared-for as provided for in John Byrd Rider's will of nearly 90 years ago.

Top photo: Honeysuckle Lodge
Center photo: Poplar Hill Mansion
Lower images: Rider graveyard and tombstones

Nabb Center Celebrates 30th Anniversary



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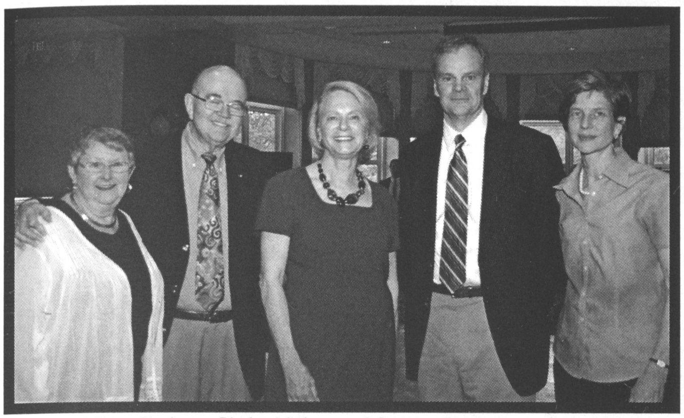

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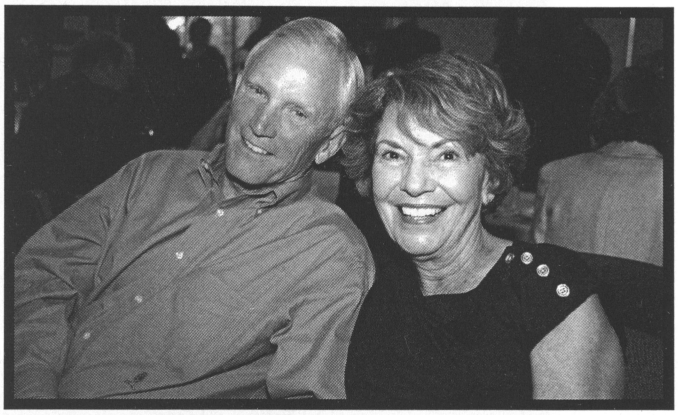

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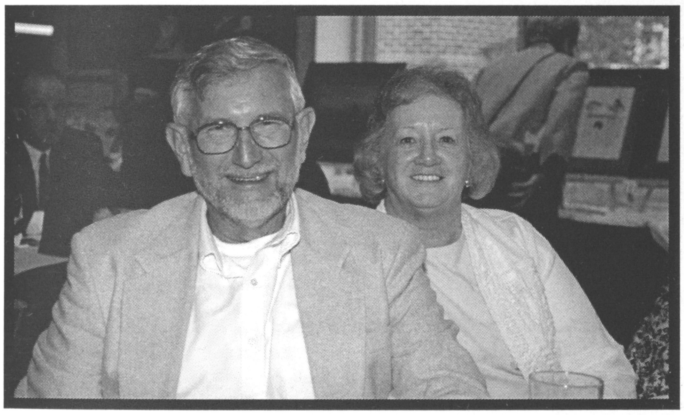

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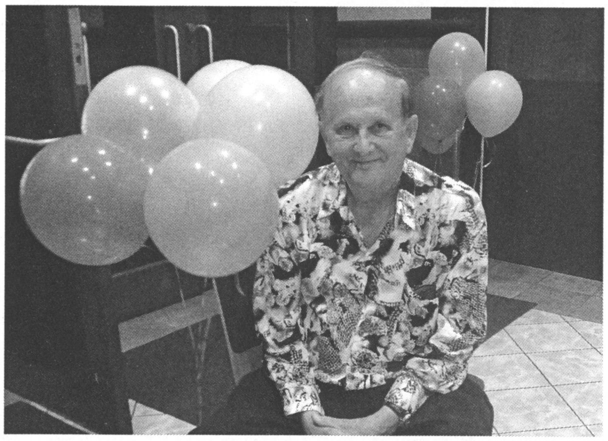

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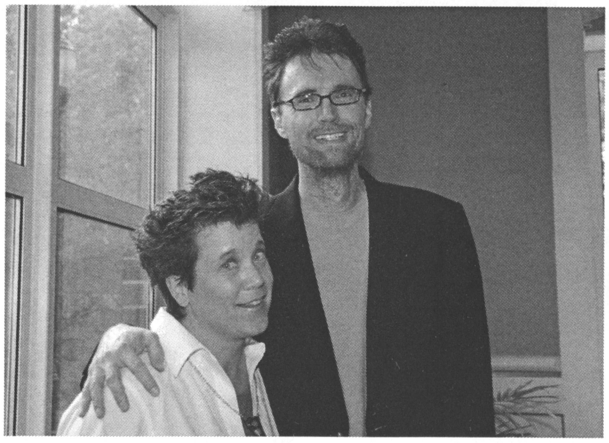

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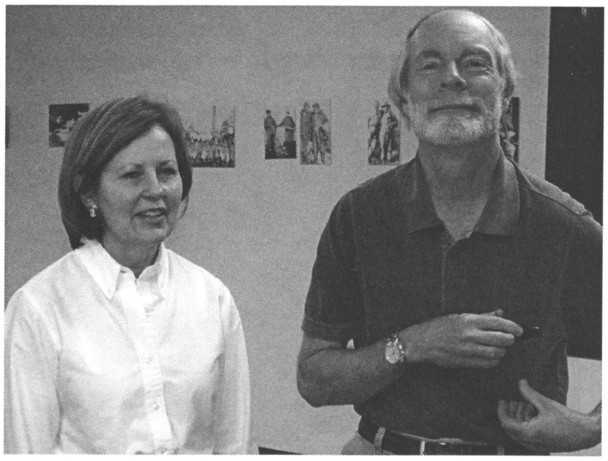

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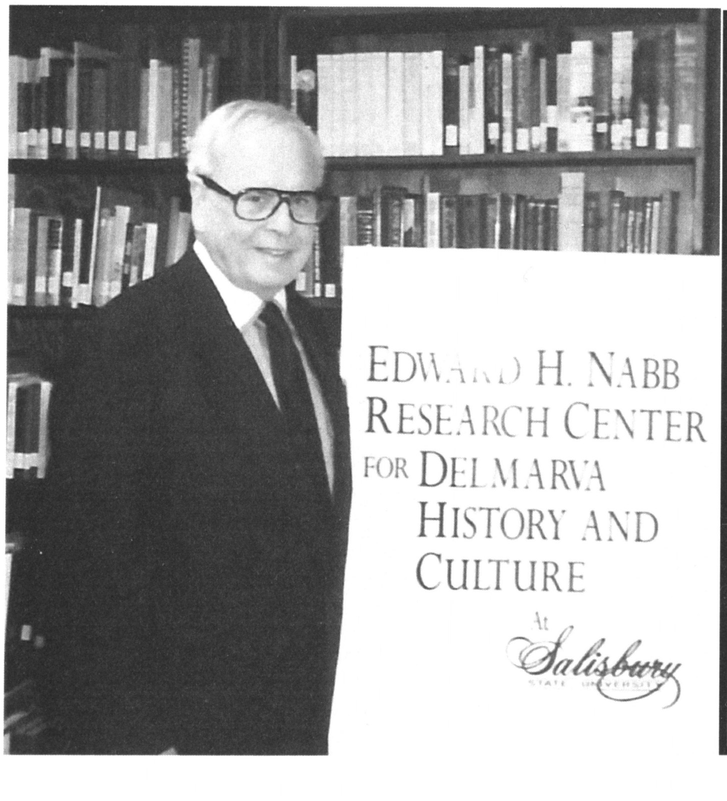
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